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Siam wins National Film Award twice in a row

Sattar sails through with AL backing

Voters' apathy marks all 6 by-polls; Hero Alam loses by 834 votes in Bogura-4

STAR REPORT

With overt blessings from the ruling Awami League, expelled BNP leader Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan won as an independent by a wide margin in Brahmanbaria-2 by-polls, which saw a voter turnout of less than 16 percent.

By-elections to five more constituencies were held yesterday, but the turn of events in Brahmanbaria leading up to the polls grabbed headlines: One of the candidates has been traceless for six days, and Sattar, known as a veteran BNP leader, chose to run as an independent at the cost of his membership in the party.

AL's support for Sattar has been public knowledge since it refrained from nominating anyone to participate in the by-election. AL leaders often joined him in the campaign trail and secured what many said was an easy win for him.

According to unofficial results, Sattar, who was an adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, bagged 40,817 votes and Jatiya Party candidate Abdul Hamid Bhasani 9,580.

Sattar was elected with BNP nomination from constituencies in Brahmanbaria and Cumilla five times, including in the 2018 national election.

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The polling station in Annada Government High School in Brahmanbaria's Sarail upazila was almost empty even half an hour after voting had begun for the Brahmanbaria-2 by-polls. The photo was taken around 9:00am. Apart from this, five other constituencies in different districts went to by-elections yesterday.

PHOTO: MASUK HRIDOY

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B'BARIA-2 BY-POLLS Missing candidate's family seeks PM's help

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Brahmanbaria

The family members of Brahmanbaria-2 candidate Abu Asif Ahmed, who has been missing for six days, have sought Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's help in finding him.

Asif's wife Meherunnesa Meherin made the appeal while talking to reporters at their house yesterday afternoon.

Former BNP president, Asif went missing on January 27. He was contesting in the election with the "motorcar" symbol.

In the Brahmanbaria-2 by-polls, he is the main opponent of expelled BNP leader and five-time member of parliament Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan.

BOTTLED LPG PRICE

BERC rate just on paper

Wholesalers hike prices on pretext of supply crunch

ASIFUR RAHMAN

Retailers are not following the fixed price of bottled liquified petroleum gas using the excuse of a supply crunch and a dated pricing method.

For January, Bangladesh Energy Regulatory Commission fixed the price of a 12kg cylinder, the most common form of marketing the fuel, at Tk 1,232.

But The Daily Star found that consumers are not getting LPG at that price.

In different areas of Dhaka city, 12 kg LPG cylinders are selling for Tk 1,500 to Tk 1,750.

But Md Khorsed, an LPG retailer in the capital's Moghbazar area, was found asking Tk 1,800 for the 12kg LPG cylinder yesterday.

Asked why he was selling at a premium he mentioned a supply crisis: the company is not providing LPG as per demand.

"We sold at that [government-fixed] rate 15 days earlier. After that, we had to purchase LPG at higher costs," he added.

The Daily Star talked to at least 10 LPG users who bought a bottle in the last two weeks from Banasree, Eskaton, Moghbazar and Dhanmondi. All of them said they got a 12kg bottle at Tk 1,400 to Tk 1,700.

"The LPG price is skyrocketing -- we are in a hostage situation," said Abu Younus, a resident of Gendaria.

This has also impacted small businesses like Jarina Begum's tea stall in the Eskaton area, which are unable to pass on the burden of higher production costs to customers.

"We are struggling to sell a cup of tea at Tk 10. If I increase the price more, no one would buy tea from me," said Begum, who purchased a 12 kg cylinder yesterday for Tk 1,750.

The situation is the same outside of Dhaka. The Daily Star spoke with several LPG consumers in Chattogram, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Rajshahi and Khulna. They said they had to spend Tk 1,350 to 1,600 to get a 12kg cylinder.

After 15-20 days, Shamsur Rahman

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

PM warns of plot to stir instability

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday blasted those who argued for an unelected government and said that there were conspiracies in motion to destabilise the country.

"But I believe in the people. Our goal is to serve the country," she added.

The premier made the remarks while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the month-long Amar Ekushey Book Fair-2023, the annual event of book lovers and publishers in the capital.

She opened the country's biggest book fair in the afternoon, joining the ceremony in person on the Bangla Academy premises after a three-year break due to Covid.

Hasina said there were some "wise persons" in the country who argued in favour of an unelected government.

"But this goes against the constitution."

The PM said her government took steps to uphold the overall democratic process. "Bangladesh has witnessed development thanks to the continuation of democracy."

She said her government has been able to keep the wheels of the country's economy moving against all odds.

She also mentioned that the transparent ballot box and preparing electoral rolls with photographs had been introduced in accordance with the proposal of the Awami League-led grand alliance to hold elections in a free and fair manner.

The party gained public support through its work, she added.

Three hit by bullets as AL factions clash 25 houses set afire in Narsingdi

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Narsingdi

At least three people suffered gunshot wounds in a factional clash between two groups of the ruling Awami League in Narsingdi's Raipura upazila yesterday.

Some 25 houses had been burnt and over 100 crude bombs detonated since the clash started, said police sources.

The clash took place between supporters of Rajib Ahmed, former executive member of the district AL, and Ismaili Siraji, president of Nilaksha union AL.

Rajib claimed, "Ismaili Siraji's supporters, led by Siddiqur Rahman, a member of ward-1, set 20-25 houses of my people on fire."

Siraji, however, could not be reached for comments

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VIDEO RELEASED BY RAB Families trace missing ones

SHAHEEN MOLLAH

Abu Jafar's family was sure that he had been living in the Maldives for the last three years. He last visited Bangladesh in 2019 and left home saying he was going to the Maldives.

Each time they contacted Jafar, he gave them the same answer: he was in the country on the Indian Ocean.

They knew something was wrong only when Rab officials visited Jafar's house in Faridpur's Charbhadrashan two months back and asked about him.

On January 30, Jafar's brother-in-law Md Shahjahan identified him in a video released by Rab on January 24. Jafar was seen cooking while some others were receiving firearms training.

Rab got the video from the mobile phone of Masikur Rahman alias Ranbir, the military commander of banned outfit Jama'atul Ansar Fil Hindal Sharqiya, who was arrested with an associate in Cox's Bazar on January 23.

This correspondent talked to at least nine other families that have identified their missing relatives in the video.

Abul Kalam, father of Raihan who went missing 15 months ago, is one of them.

He told The Daily Star that he contacted Rab on January 27 seeing his son in the video sent by a relative. Before this, some Rab members came to his house two months back and took information about Raihan.

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4

Spot purchase of LNG resumes after 7 months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh has resumed the purchase of liquified natural gas from the international spot market after a pause of seven months as the government looks to ensure adequate supply for energy-starved industries.

Last week, state-owned Rupantarita Prakritik Gas Company Ltd (RPGCL) sought one LNG cargo to be delivered in late February, reports Reuters.

While the tender has not been awarded, the lowest offer was made at \$19.74 per Million British Thermal Units (MMBtu) by the European Total Energies among four participants who competed, it said.

Bangladesh last bought LNG from the spot market in June last year at \$24.25 per MMBtu.

The offer from TotalEnergies was approved by the cabinet committee on purchase yesterday. The LNG cargo would have 33,600 MMBtu, according to meeting minutes.

From now onwards, Petrobangla, which is in charge of LNG imports, would be purchasing cargo regularly from the spot market, said one of its officials on the condition of anonymity.

The resumption of LNG purchase

SEE PAGE 2 COL 4



Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina enquires about newly published books while her sister Sheikh Rehana poses with a book authored by President Abdul Hamid while visiting a stall at the Ekushey Boi Mela in the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan yesterday. After inaugurating the fair, the PM, also accompanied by Bangla Academy President and novelist Selina Hossain, made rounds and visited the stalls of various publishing houses.

PHOTO: PID

Hajj package cost rises by over a quarter

Appreciation of Saudi riyal against taka, high airfare cited as reasons

RASHIDUL HASAN

A Bangladeshi pilgrim will have to spend Tk 6.83 lakh to perform hajj this year under government management, up by around Tk 1.61 lakh on the previous year.

Hajj under private management will cost a pilgrim a minimum of Tk 6.57 lakh this year, around Tk 1.36 lakh more than in 2022.

This was decided in a meeting of the executive committee on hajj management at the secretariat yesterday, with State Minister for Religious Affairs Md Faridul Haque Khan in the chair.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, the state minister said the government announced two hajj packages of Tk 5,86,340 and Tk 5,21,150 last year, but the number of packages has come down to one this year.

The Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (Haab), a platform of private hajj tour operators, would formally declare its hajj package rates at a press conference at a city hotel today, Haab

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Printing press staffer ‘picked up’, owner goes missing

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of plainclothes men claiming to be DB officials picked up an employee of a printing press from the capital’s Fakirapool on Tuesday. His employer went missing after the incident, said family members.

Saiful Islam, 28, a designer of Herar Jyoti Design and Printing, and Mominul Islam, 47, the owner, remained traceless as of filing of this report last night.

Quoting witnesses, Masum Billah, brother-in-law of Mominul, said some plainclothes men claiming to be Detective Brach officials went to the press on Aliza Tower around noon on Tuesday.

They interrogated Saiful, picked him up and took away computers from the press, Masum alleged.

Wishing anonymity, a trader at Aliza Tower also gave a similar account of the incident.

Masum said, “Mominul Islam was away from the press during the raid. But his mobile phone remains switched off since then.”

He said Mominul’s family members went to Motijheel and Paltan police stations to know about the whereabouts of the two, but nobody said anything.

Masum said they later came to know that a DB team detained the two, but there was no official confirmation.

Rajib Al Masud, deputy commissioner of the Detective Branch (Motijheel Division) of police, yesterday said his team neither detained any such persons nor conducted any raid in Fakirapool on Tuesday.

Mostafizur Rahman, a sub-inspector at Motijheel Police Station, said he visited the press, collected CCTV footage from Aliza Tower, and conducted an investigation into the incident.

Asked if any DB team carried out a raid, he told this newspaper that he would only comment on the issue after having instructions from high officials.

CCTV footage showed that plainclothes men taking away computers from Aliza Tower at 1:20pm on Tuesday.



Ukrainian servicemen stand near a military vehicle with anti-aircraft cannon at their positions near a front line, amid Russia’s attack on Ukraine, in Donetsk region yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Myanmar junta extends emergency on coup anniv

Move likely to delay August polls; US, EU, allies call for an end to violence

AGENCIES

Myanmar’s junta extended the country’s state of emergency by another six months, state media reported yesterday, likely delaying elections the military had pledged to hold by August.

The country has been in turmoil since the army’s power grab in 2021, and a subsequent crackdown on dissent has sparked fighting across swathes of the nation while tanking the economy.

On the second anniversary of the putsch, state media reported that the National Defence and Security Council had agreed to junta chief Min Aung Hlaing’s request to prolong the state of emergency declared when the generals

toppled Aung San Suu Kyi’s government.

The “state of emergency will be extended for another six months starting from February 1”, Acting President Myint Swe was quoted as saying. The announcement came as streets emptied and shops closed across Myanmar in protest on the anniversary and Western powers launched a fresh broadside of sanctions against the generals.

International community, in a joint statement yesterday, called on Myanmar to end violence and create space for meaningful and inclusive dialogue to allow for any democratic process to resume, reports UNB.

The joint statement was made by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union, and the foreign ministers of Albania,

Armenia, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, the Federated States of Micronesia, Georgia, Ghana, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Streets in the commercial hub Yangon were largely deserted from late morning, AFP correspondents said, after activists called for people across the country to close businesses and stay indoors.

Roads leading to the famous Shwedagon pagoda -- a Buddhist shrine that dominates Yangon’s skyline and is usually thronged by worshippers -- were

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Sattar sails through with

FROM PAGE 1

In yesterday’s by-polls to the six constituencies, three AL nominees, two independents with AL support, and a Jatiya Party nominee won.

Voter turnout was poor in all the constituencies and clashes were reported in some places.

In Bogura-4, independent runner Ashraf Hossain Alam, popularly known as Hero Alam, lost to a ruling grand alliance candidate and Jatiya Samantantrik Dal leader Rezaul Karim Tansen by 834 votes. The former got 19,871 votes. The voter turnout was 23 percent.

In Thakurgaon-3, Jatiya Party leader Hafiz Uddin Ahmed won with 25,463 votes followed by independent candidate Gopal Chandra Roy’s 16,691 and the AL-led grand alliance candidate Yasin Ali’s 7,010. Voter turnout was 38 percent.

In Bogura-6 which saw a 22 percent turnout, AL candidate Ragebul Ahsan won with 49,336 votes, defeating the closest rival Abdul Mannan, an independent, who bagged 21,864 votes.

In Chapainawabganj-3, AL candidate Abdul Wadud won by bagging 69,638 votes while his nearest rival Samiul Haq got 55,980. Voter turnout was 29 percent.

In Chapainawabganj-2, AL candidate Ziaur Rahman won with 94,928 votes while his nearest rival independent candidate Mohammad Ali Sarkar bagged 25,399. Voter turnout was 35 percent.

The by-elections were needed as seven BNP lawmakers resigned from parliament as a protest.

After voting was done, Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal said, “The by-polls were held peacefully and there were no allegations of vote rigging and other irregularities.”

BRAHMANBARIA-2 BY-POLLS

Abu Asif Ahmed, who is running as an independent, has been missing since Friday.

At Sarail Annada Govt High School centre, polling officials and law enforcers were in their designated places by 8:30am. But none of the 4,041 voters turned up until 9:00am.

The first voter to walk in was a man named Ripon Mia. He said he went there mostly because of his curiosity to see the Electronic

Voting Machines.

Presiding Officer Syed Zakir Hossain said, “Maybe the turnout is low because it’s a winter morning.”

At Sarail Sadar Union Parishad polling centre, the usual queue of voters was not seen at 9:30am. There were 3,687 voters in the centre.

The scenario was similar at almost all the polling centres. The only exception was found in Pak Shimul Union Parishad of Sarail upazila, the ancestral village of Sattar.

Contacted, Returning Officer Shahgir Alam said bringing voters to the polling centres is not the responsibility of the officers. “The weather can be a factor. Besides, the candidates might have failed to motivate the voters,” he said.

At Pakshimul Government Primary School and Aruyil Bohumukhi High School centres, Sattar’s polling agents were found in the polling booths.

One of them, Bachchu Mia, was found in a booth along with a voter at Aruyil. When Assistant Presiding Officer Joynal Abedin was asked about it, he said, “I just went to the bathroom.”

Missing candidate Asif’s wife Meherunnisa Meherin did not cast her vote even after going to her designated Shramkalyan Kendra polling centre at noon.

Shimul Mridha, a resident of Talshahar area of Ashuganj, said the ruling party men were desperate to make Sattar win.

He said, “They worked shamelessly for him. Everyone knew what would be the outcome of this election. That’s why nobody bothered to go to the polling centre.”

Alamgir Hossain, a resident of the same area, said since Asif has been missing, his supporters didn’t bother voting.

CHAPAINAWABGANJ-2 and -3

Incidents of violence were reported in Chapainawabganj-3.

Supporters of different candidates chased each other near Adarsha Zila School in the town around 9:00am.

Besides, four crude bombs were detonated near Krisnagovindapur Girls High School around 2:00pm. Polling was suspended at the centre soon afterwards.

Clashes between different groups took place in the Shantimor and Sonarmor areas leaving three people

injured later in the afternoon.

As law enforcers reached the scene, the crowds hurled a crude bomb at Rab men. Officers then fired 30 to 35 blank shots to calm the situation, said Commander Ruh-Fi Tahmin Toukir of Rab-5.

However, by-polls to Chapainawabganj-2 were peaceful. Bogura and Thakurgaon

In Bogura-6, the polling centres were controlled by the ruling party men.

A group of Jubo League men led by Abdul Motin Sarkar, brother of former Jubo League leader Tufan Sarkar was at the Jubli Institution polling centre in Bogura.

Several locals said they were not comfortable going to the centre.

Asked, Motin said he was just helping the voters.

AL men were also seen in Bogura Pre-cadet High School, Thanthania Nurun Ala Nur Fazil Madrasa and some other polling stations.

Independent candidate Abdul Manna Akanda alleged that over 100 centres were occupied by the ruling party men.

Hero Alam said his polling agents were forced to leave the polling stations.

Contacted, the Returning Officer Saiful Islam said, “When we get information of irregularities, we send magistrates to take action.”

Three hit

FROM PAGE 1

after repeated attempts over the phone.

Kamal Bashar, resident medical officer of Narsingdi Sadar Hospital, said, three people -- Tofazzal Hossain, Rabiul Miah and Rashed -- were admitted to the hospital with multiple bullet injuries.

Murad Hossain, a sub-inspector of Raipura Police Station, confirmed the incident.

“Police have been conducting drives to bring the situation under control,” he said, adding that no one was arrested as of 3:00pm as no complaint was lodged.

Legal actions will be taken against those responsible, the SI added.

Mohammad Azizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Raipura Police Station, also could not be reached over the phone after repeated attempts.

BERC rate just on paper

FROM PAGE 1

Nobin, a retailer in Rajshahi’s court station area, was able to get LPG bottles from his wholesaler for Tk 1,550. He is selling those for Tk 1,620 -- Tk 400 more than the government-fixed retail price.

The importers and distributors blamed the higher price on the middlemen as well as an incompatible price method of BERC.

“There was a supply chain disruption as we were unable to open letters of credit and the middlemen exploited the situation,” said Jakaria Jalal, head of division at Basundhara LP Gas, the market leader.

But, it is not possible to sell LPG at

the rate fixed by BERC.

“There were lots of problems in the pricing process of BERC. They told us that they will hold a fresh public hearing to form a new formula, but they have not.”

In the meantime, the price of LPG increased in the global market in February.

“We have to spend at least Tk 250 more on a cylinder than in January,” Jalal added.

Contacted, BERC member (Petroleum) Md Kamruzzaman acknowledged receiving complaints last month of higher prices than the rate fixed.

Spot purchase of LNG resumes

FROM PAGE 1

comes on the back of plummeting prices, which have dropped by a third from the record highs of \$70.50 MMBtu in August 2022 since the start of the year on slower demand and high inventory levels in Europe and North Asia.

The development also means the industries, which have been running on a truncated production schedule for want of gas, can brace themselves for uninterrupted supply once again.

To enable the spot purchases, the government last month hiked the

retail price of gas by 14.5 percent to 178.9 percent for industries, power plants and commercial establishments, who together account for 78 percent of gas use in Bangladesh.

“So, supplying uninterrupted gas to them is our first priority now,” the Petrobangla official said.

If the LNG price stays at this level, the government will continue to purchase from the spot market, Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, told The Daily Star earlier on January 18.

Families trace missing ones

FROM PAGE 1

Kalam, a resident of Dhaka’s Kamrangirchar area, said his son had gone to Dubai in 2018 as a worker.

On November 9, 2021, a woman called Raihan’s uncle and told him that Raihan had returned home and was staying at a friend’s house in the capital’s Badda.

“When I went there to look for him, I was told that Raihan had gone to another friend’s house in Cumilla. I went there but found no trace of him. We later reported the matter to law enforcers,” Kalam told The Daily Star.

Raihan’s father believes his son may have joined the outfit when he was abroad. He requested the law enforcers to rescue his son alive and bring him back home.

Mahmud Dakua, a graduate student at New Model University College in the capital’s Shukrabad,

used to run a bookshop at Nilkhet. He lived with his elder brother on Lalit Mohan Das Lane in old Dhaka.

On the afternoon of March 18, 2021, he left the shop and has been missing since.

The following day, his relatives filed a general diary with the New Market Police Station. Posters were also pasted in different parts of the country seeking his whereabouts, but to no avail.

On January 25, the family members identified him in the video and contacted Rab. He was seen in the video thrice.

Mahmud’s elder brother Rasel Dakua told The Daily Star that he brought Mahmud to Dhaka from Barishal’s Bakerganj in 2016 and admitted him to the college.

A few days before he went missing, Rasel had seen some changes in Mahmud’s attitude

DIGITAL SECURITY ACT

Man lands in jail for ‘hurting religious sentiment’

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A Chattogram court yesterday sent a man to jail in connection with a case filed under the controversial Digital Security Act.

Clinton Ghosh, 29, of Shariatpur, was sued on July 19, 2021, for hurting religious sentiment.

Pradeep Kumar Dutta, member of the board of trustees of Kaibalyadham Trust, filed the case against him with Akbar Shah Police Station.

Police arrested Clinton in Shariatpur’s Naria area on Monday and produced him before the court yesterday.

“Clinton and some others posted defamatory comments about the head of Kaibalyadham temple Mohant Maharaj and other members of the board of trustees,” said Asif Mohiuddin, additional deputy commissioner (counter-terrorism) of Chattogram Metropolitan Police.

“They used their personal Facebook profiles to spread comments that hurt religious sentiment,” he further said, adding that Clinton’s mobile phone was also seized.

5 sued over abduction, rape of minor

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Benapole

Five men were accused early yesterday in a case filed over the abduction and rape of a madrasa girl in Jashore Sadar upazila in December last year.

According to the case statement, Kashem Sardar, Ismail Hossain, Rabiul Islam, Md Ismail, and Habibur Rahman of Kazdia village abducted the 14-year-old on December 28.

Habibur took the girl to his village home and raped her there while the others acted as his accomplice.

She managed to flee from confinement the next day and returned to her family.

On Monday, the girl’s father filed a complaint with Jashore Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal, which then ordered for it to be recorded as a case with the local police station.

Following the tribunal’s order, the complaint was registered with Jashore Kotwali Police Station in the early hours of Wednesday, said Officer-in-Charge Tamijul Islam.

The girl’s father said he had been trying to file the case since the day of the incident but could not as the abductors were influential people.

He was finally able to do so after the tribunal passed the order, he added.



Talks ongoing to generate hydrogen power from seawater: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday told parliament that discussions are going on about the production of hydrogen electricity from seawater.

She said this in response to a query by Awami League lawmaker Anwar Hossain Khan.

Referring to the new concept of hydrogen power generation from seawater, the premier said discussions are underway with all the concerned

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4



Be it browsing through books at a stall or hanging out with friends, the Ekushey Boi Mela has something for everyone. The month-long congregation of book lovers started yesterday at the capital's Suhrawardy Udyan and Bangla Academy.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Finally, the wait is over

Amar Ekushey Boi Mela kicks off

DIPAN NANDY

For the first time in three years, February 1 marked the opening day of the Amar Ekushey Boi Mela, commemorating the memories of the Language Movement martyrs. The fair will continue till February 28.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the book fair in person after three years, with the apt theme of "Read books and build Bangabandhu's Bangladesh".

After the inauguration ceremony, the doors of Boi Mela were opened for the public at 5:30pm, when people of all ages and all walks of life gathered at the Suhrawardy Udyan premises, where the fair is being held.

Mahbub Jamil Pulak, who visited the fair on its opening day, said, "I'm an avid music lover and so, I'm looking for books related to music. I bought Joy Shariar's 'Rupali Guitar', written about rock legend Ayub Bachchu and 'Niloy Da' about celebrated musician Niloy Das, edited by Milu Aman and Haque Faruk."

"I'm happy to be back at the fair without any restrictions. I will come back again to purchase books by my favourite writers," he added.

Another visitor Jannatul Nayem Annanya, who came to the fair with her friends, said, "This is the first time that I'm visiting the fair on its opening day. The premises look vibrant with all the new books."

Publishers, on the other hand, are expecting some good sales as readers can now visit the fair without any restrictions in place.

"Our book fair business has been in a bad shape for the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

CURBING AIR POLLUTION

'Govt must implement HC directives'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government must implement the 12 High Court directives to curb air pollution immediately, including spraying water on the roads and banning black smoke-emitting vehicles, demanded environmentalists.

They made the demands at a discussion, titled "Urgent measures needed to curb air pollution in Dhaka", held yesterday at Dhaka Reporters Unity premises.

Save The Environment Movement, Work for a Better Bangladesh (WBB Trust), Jonoudoyg, Nagorik Adhikar Sanrakshan Forum (Nasaf), Green Force, DU Poribesh Sangsad, and environmentalists from Bangladesh Safe Water Movement's jointly organised the discussion.

Speakers said air pollution in the capital has reached a dangerous level. According to AirVisual's air quality index data, 23 days out of the first 24 days of January saw Dhaka's air quality at an alarming level. The air quality index indicated that the air quality was at a hazardous level of 301+ with the highest level of air pollution recorded at 635 on 12th January.

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Don't eat food from strangers

5 members of dope gang arrested in Dhaka

MOHAMMAD JAMIL KHAN

They sell Ayurvedic medicines on buses and trains. Some members of the gang travel on specific vehicles in the guise of passengers. In the middle of the journey, the other members get on board and pitch benefits of the medication. To make the pitch more credible, the "commuters" begin hyping up the medicines, saying "I took it before and it was helpful".

Because of all the "positive feedback", some travellers fall right into the trap and buy the products. The catch is that these seemingly innocuous ayurvedic medicines are mixed with powerful sedatives. As a result, commuters become unconscious shortly after consuming those. And then, the gang starts snatching away valuables from the targets.

Mizanur Rahman Molla alias Molla Mizanur, the leader of the dope gang, described the techniques while talking to this newspaper recently.

Mizanur, also known as "Guru" among his associates, has been involved in such activities for over one and a half decades on Dhaka-Chattogram and Dhaka-Sylhet highways, and different routes of north Bengal.

Law enforcers have arrested him six times so far, but Mizanur returned to this life of crime after securing bail every time.

Recently, the detective branch (DB) of police arrested Mizanur again, alongside four others -- Sumon, Sarwar, Abul Basar, and Nure Alam --

from different areas of the capital on Sunday.

Mashiur Rahman, deputy commissioner of DB (Lalbagh division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, told The Daily Star that they are now interrogating the arrestees to learn about other dope gangs.

Generally, these gangs usually operate during summer, but this year, they started looting people before the end of winter, he said.

Mizanur, also known as "Guru" among his associates, has been involved in such activities for over one and a half decades on Dhaka-Chattogram highways, Dhaka-Sylhet highways, and different routes of north Bengal. Law enforcers have arrested him six times so far, but Mizanur returned to this life of crime after securing bail every time.

Detectives came to know about the gang's activities and arrested the five while investigating a recent complaint of a district additional judge.

The additional judge was going to Dhaka from Chattogram on a public bus. As he did not reach home in time, his relatives started to search for him.

Finally, he was found unconscious

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

DHAKA AIRPORT

Runway to be closed 5hrs daily for two months

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The runway of Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport will remain closed for five hours each night for the next two months starting today for renovation of the runway's lighting system.

Kamrul Islam, executive director of HSIA, told The Daily Star that flight operations at the country's largest airport will be closed from 2:00am to 7:00am every day till April 2.

Flights of different airlines have been shifted to other times of the day, he added.

Usually, seven to eight flights operate in this window, and shifting of those flights will create additional pressure.

To handle this pressure, the authorities have asked for better coordination, so that passengers do not have to be stuck at the airport for a long time.

Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) took the initiative to upgrade the instrument landing system (ILS) of the airports in Dhaka, Chattogram,

Sylhet and Cox's Bazar to Category-2, so that flights can land at those airports despite fog.

Kamrul said the airport

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

Dhaka, Tokyo vow deeper ties

BSS, Dhaka

Japan's new ambassador to Bangladesh Iwama Kiminori yesterday said the relations between the two countries will be strengthened further in future.

He made the remarks while paying a courtesy call on Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader at his secretariat office in Dhaka.

"Japan and Bangladesh are very good friends -- the two countries are working together to further strengthen this relationship," the envoy said.

They discussed various issues related to the interests of the two countries.

The envoy said Japan is cooperating with Bangladesh in the construction of various infrastructures including metro rail "and it will continue in the future".

Senior officials of the ministry and secretariat were present at the meeting.

BANGLADESH-KOREA TIES

This year will be a milestone: envoy

UNB, Dhaka

South Korean Ambassador to Bangladesh Lee Jang-keun yesterday said this year will be momentous in terms of Bangladesh-Korea relations and efforts are underway to further strengthen the relationship.

"We want to make it a milestone year," he said while speaking at a programme at the South Korean embassy in Dhaka.

The ambassador thanked the Korean community in Bangladesh for celebrating 50 years of Bangladesh-South Korea diplomatic relations.

To celebrate and propel economic success and celebrate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties, the Korean Community Association is gearing up for "Korea Week 2023" -- to be held at the International Convention City Bashundhara (ICCB) and Kurmitola Golf Club in Dhaka from February 25 to March 3 with the theme "Stay Strong, March Together".

Democracy has won

Says Quader after by-polls to 6 constituencies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said democracy has won as the by-elections to six constituencies were held in a free and fair manner.

"The elections in all the six constituencies were held in a peaceful atmosphere. Who will win or lose the election -- that was not our main concern. Our goal was to conduct free and fair elections. This by-elections prove the victory of democracy in the country," said Quader.

He made the remark while addressing the "peace rally" organised by Dhaka city (south) unit AL, protesting the BNP-Jamaat's "terror and anarchy", at the capital's Jatrahari intersection.

As BNP leaders and activists marched from the capital's Mugda to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

'An anti-people decision'

Gano Forum urges govt to scrap move to hike electricity price

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has taken an anti-people decision by increasing the electricity price twice in a month without holding any mass hearing, said Dr Kamal Hossain, president of Gano Forum.

In a joint statement, he said people are already reeling from the unbridled price hike of essentials and inflation.

The government on Tuesday increased the electricity price by 5 percent at the retail level -- the second hike in 19 days, as it steadily retracts subsidies from the power sector while piling the burden on common people already struggling with inflation.

On top of that, the continuous price hike of power, gas and energy due to the wrong decision and inappropriate planning in the energy sector will further cause untold sufferings to people, reads a press release.

Dr Kamal has asked the government to form an inquiry commission comprising experts to take an appropriate plan to prevent corruption and wastage in the energy sector.

In the statement, the party has called upon the government to scrap its decision. Gano Forum General Secretary Mizanur Rahman is another signatory of the statement.



In order to create awareness on anti-microbial resistance, Directorate General of Drug Administration organised an art competition for students of Viqarunnisa Noon School and College at its main campus in the capital's Bailey Road yesterday.

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



Kajol is one of few artisans in Khulna who makes Jamdani sari. He has been at his craft for almost 22 years now. He makes the saris with meticulous details and each one takes him around 15-20 days to make. Depending on the design, the price ranges between Tk 7,000 and Tk 30,000. This photo was taken in Khulna's Fultala area recently.

PHOTO: HABIBUR RAHMAN

Poetry festival begins at DU

DU CORRESPONDENT

A two day Jatiya Kabita Utsab with the theme “Banglar Sadhinata, Amar Kobita” began yesterday on the premises of Dhaka University’s Central Library. The festival is organised by Jatiya Kabita Parishad. The festival comprised poetry recitations and seminars. This year’s edition has been dedicated to poet Kazi Rosy and poet Habibullah Siraji. A large number of local and foreign poets and recitation artists are taking part in the festival.

Will revamp space under Hanif flyover: Taposh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DSCC Mayor Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh yesterday said they will take steps to beautify and revamp the space under Mayor Mohammad Hanif Flyover, as per the demand of city dwellers. He said this after visiting the sites under the flyover, stretching from Nimtoli to Fulbaria. “We have already appointed a consulting firm.” Regarding the cafe built at Bahadur Shah Park, Taposh said misleading information is being given about this. “The park was occupied. There were drug abusers, vagrants. We have taken initiatives to get rid of these. Visitors can enjoy the scenic surroundings, and a temporary food stall has been installed.”

Talks ongoing

FROM PAGE 3

companies proposed in this regard. “If possible, the feasibility of hydrogen power generation at Matarbari, Maheshkhali or Banshkhali will be verified,” she said in her scripted answer. In his question, Anwar Hossain wanted to know whether the government has plans to set up a hydroelectric power station to generate electricity from seawater at a convenient location in the Bay of Bengal near Cox’s Bazar. In response, the Prime Minister said in some countries, electricity is generated by using sea tides, which is costly and has not been commercially

successful. There are currently no plans to set up such a power plant. Mentioning that the production of hydrogen electricity is very costly, she said such a plan can be taken if the costs come down in the future. While responding to another query by AL lawmaker Mahfuzur Rahman, Hasina said 1,558 bridges and 7,498 culverts have been constructed or reconstructed during the tenure of the incumbent government. “The work to upgrade 908.49 km of roads to four lanes or more is also in progress. Of this, 235.03 km of roads have already been made into four lanes or more,” she added.

Govt must Implement HC

FROM PAGE 3

Save The Environment Movement Chairman Abu Naser Khan highlighted the importance of implementing the HC directives, while Professor Adil Mohammed Khan, executive director of Institute for Planning and Development (IPD), emphasised immediate action to improve air quality and protect public health. “The government is

constructing buildings by cutting down the trees. In the last ten years, the number of private cars and motorcycles has increased abnormally, which causes pollution,” said Adil. “Despite the efforts by the Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) to reduce pollution, the Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) is not taking any action,” said Ahmad Kamruzzaman Majumder, joint secretary

of Bangladesh Poribesh Andolon. Gaous Pearce, director of WBB Trust, said, “The government should prioritise public health and instruct the city authorities to conduct awareness campaigns.” Public health expert Dr Lenin Chowdhury, Nasaf President Hafizur Rahman Moyna, and Jonoudoyg’s Consultant Azizur Rahman Khan Asad spoke at the event, among others.

Inspiring others to stand

FROM PAGE 5

AN INSPIRATION FOR OTHERS Fatema Begum (34), a widow hailing from Brahmanbaria district, got the idea of rearing quail from Doly through social media. After watching relevant posts, she contacted Doly over messenger app and learnt all about starting a farm of her own. Now she is financially solvent by rearing quails. She now has about 500

birds, 400 of which lay eggs regularly. “It’s a profitable sector. The demand for quail eggs and meat is high,” she added. Suma Akter, hailing from Keraniganj, also saw success by following Doly’s footsteps. “I came to know about Doly from a relative and collected 30 quails from her about three years back,” she said. Doly said, “If anyone

comes to me, I encourage quail rearing and give them necessary training on the matter. About 200 youths and widows in the last 10 years started rearing quails and became solvent.” Dr Habibur Rahman, deputy director of the Department of Livestock Services, said, “Doly is a role model on quail farming in Bangladesh. We awarded her several times for her contribution in the sector.”

Don’t eat food from strangers

FROM PAGE 3

at Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital, according to detectives. This newspaper managed to talk with Mizanur while he was being taken to court after his arrest. Hailing from Faridpur, Mizanur studied at a madrasa in Khulna. He dropped out, came to Dhaka and started selling Islamic books and candy at the capital’s Moghbazar in 2000, with his uncle Mukul Molla. Three years later, he started selling different Ayurvedic medicines on

buses and trains and started stealing valuables from people using sedatives. Mizanur said he speaks Arabic fluently, which made it easy for him to charm commuters. It all started when he met a person named Dulal while selling books. The person praised Mizan’s marketing skills, gave him medicines and said he will pay Tk 500 for each sale. At that time, Mizan didn’t know he was getting involved with a criminal gang. But after the first operation, he soon realised what Dulal actually meant by medicines, and gradually found himself to be a member.

The passengers go to sleep within 20 minutes to half an hour after consuming the medicines. Sometimes, the gang puts powerful sedatives on tissue paper and puts that in front of the passenger’s nose to make them unconscious, said Mizanur. DB DC Mashiur Rahman said a little awareness is needed to protect oneself. “The bus driver and helper should be aware, and people should not eat anything from strangers.” The official added that they will talk with bus-company owners to not let any hawkers get on board.

SC chamber judge

FROM PAGE 5

as the chamber judge of the Appellate Division,” Justice M Enayetur Rahim said during passing the orders. Court sources said this is for the first time a chamber judge of the Appellate

Division delivered orders in Bangla. Earlier in the day, three High Court benches led by Justice Naima Haider; Justice Md Nazrul Islam Talukder and Justice Abu Taher Md Saifur Rahman delivered judgements and

orders in Bangla. Meanwhile, Chief Justice Hasan Foez Siddique inaugurated a Bangla edition of the Supreme Court website, confirmed SC Spokesman Mohammad Saifur Rahman to The Daily Star.

Runway to be closed

FROM PAGE 5

authority has taken plans for flight management in coordination with the related government and private institutions, including the airport traffic

department, to make the journey of passengers smooth and uninterrupted. The authorities have also formed monitoring teams to implement the plans.

Democracy has won

FROM PAGE 3

Malibagh area yesterday to press home the party’s 10-point demand, which includes holding the national election under a non-partisan government, AL held its rally too. More than 5,000 activists took part in the rally. Addressing the rally,

AL presidium member advocate Kamrul Islam alleged that BNP repeatedly deceived the people, and that is why the people don’t trust them anymore. AL’s Joint General Secretary Mahbubul Alam Hanif said BNP’s aim is to seize power by destabilising the country.

Finally, the wait is over

FROM PAGE 3

last two years. We hope to recover from the previous years’ losses this year,” Anyaprokash CEO Mazharul Islam told The Daily Star. “We are also trying hard to keep the price in check amid the increasing costs of papers and publishing materials,” he added. However, the opening day saw the fair as an

under-prepared one. Over 50 stalls were not open on the first day. Many stalls had garbage and setting materials such as wood and plastic scattered all over the premises. The actual number of books was not announced by Bangla Academy’s information centre. Among the many books that have been released on the opening day were

– Sheikh Hasina’s “Sheikh Fazilatun Nesa, Amar Maa” (Charulipi Prokashon), Harishankar Jaldas’s “Karna” (Kathaprokash), Akbar Ali Khan’s “Mujibnagar Sarker o Bortoman Bangladesh”, Anisul Hoque’s “Parijater Jonno Valobasha” (Prothoma), and Mauli Azad’s ‘Egalor Chokh” (Agami).



BANGLADESH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
National Science & Technology Complex, Agargaon, Dhaka-1207
Website: www.bas.org.bd

Academy Awards in Science and Technology
Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) announces the following awards in Science and Technology as stated below:
1. BAS Gold Medal Award 2022
Two awards, one for Physical Sciences including Engineering & Technology and another for Biological Sciences including Agriculture & Life Sciences, will be given in each of the following two groups:
a) Senior Group for Scientists aged 40 or above on 31 December 2022
b) Junior Group for Scientists below 40 years on 31 December 2022
2. BAS-National Professor Dr. M. Innas Ali Memorial Gold Medal Award-2022
For a distinguished scientist with outstanding achievement in any branch of Science and Technology. There is no age bar.
Bangladeshi scientists and technologists who have distinguished themselves by their outstanding scientific and technological work may apply for the above awards. Heads of research institutions/respective Deans of Universities/ Fellows of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences may nominate candidates for the awards or Candidates themselves may apply through their Heads of institutions directly. Each nominee/candidate is required to submit 7 copies of their bio-data, list of publications and patents and a reprint of each of the important publications along with soft copy.
Note: Those who were awarded Gold Medal in any of the above categories earlier are not eligible for nomination for any of the categories. One can apply for only one of the above 1-2 categories. However, gold medal awardees in category 1 under junior group may be nominated for award in the senior group, if eligible. Any one candidate may apply for only one of the categories. Candidates are requested to fill the summary sheet (available on the BAS website) with the submission of application.
Application/nomination for the above awards must reach the Secretary of the Academy by **28 February 2023** at the latest.
Prof. Dr. Haseena Khan
Secretary



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NOTICE
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF BANGLADESH
HIGH COURT DIVISION
(Statutory Original Jurisdiction)
COMPANY MATTER NO. 35 OF 2023
IN THE MATTER OF:
Bangalink Digital Communication Limited, office at Tigers Den, House 4 (SWH), Bir Uttam Mir Shawkat Sarak, Gulshan-1, Dhaka-1212.
... PETITIONER
– Versus –
Bansuri Tower Company Limited, office at Tigers Den, House 4 (SWH), Bir Uttam Mir Shawkat Sarak, Gulshan-1, Dhaka and another.
... RESPONDENTS
Notice is hereby given to all concerned that an application under Section 81(2) read with Section 85(3) and 396 of the Companies Act, 1994 was filed and moved before the Hon’ble High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh on behalf of the petitioner Bangalink Digital Communication Limited, praying for condonation of delay in holding the Annual General Meetings of Bansuri Tower Company Limited for the calendar years 2019 to 2022. Upon a preliminary hearing on 29.01.2023, Mr. Justice Khizir Ahmed Choudhury kindly admitted the application. If anyone is interested to oppose the said application, he may appear before the Hon’ble High Court either in person or through an authorized Advocate on or before the date fixed for hearing to make necessary statements. Copy of the application may be obtained from the undersigned on payment of usual charges.
Tanim Hussain Shawon
Barrister-at-Law
Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Dr. Kamal Hossain & Associates
Chamber Building (2nd Floor)
122-124, Motijheel Commercial Area
Dhaka-1000,
Mobile: 01711455247



বঙ্গবন্ধু শেখ মুজিবুর রহমান অ্যাভিয়েশন
অ্যান্ড অ্যারোস্পেস বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়
পুরাতন বিমানবন্দর, ঢাকা সেনানিবাস, ঢাকা-১২১৫।
Invitation for Tenders
No: BSMRAAU/Registrar/163/2023/Part File/OTM-14/03A Date: 01 February 2023

GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Education		
2	Procuring Entity Name	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University (BSMRAAU)		
3	Procuring Entity District	Dhaka, Bangladesh		
4	Invitation for	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF WORKSHOP TECHNOLOGY LAB FOR BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN AVIATION AND AEROSPACE UNIVERSITY AT LALMONIRHAT CAMPUS		
5	Invitation Ref No	BSMRAAU Open Tender No: OTM-14/2022-2023		
6	Date	01 February 2023		
KEY INFORMATION				
7	Procurement Method	Open Tender Method		
FUNDING INFORMATION				
8	Budget and Source of Funds	Government of Bangladesh		
PARTICULAR INFORMATION				
9	Tender Publication Date	01 February 2023		
		Date	Time	
10	Tender Last Selling Date	02 March 2023	02:00 PM	
11	Tender Closing Date and Time	05 March 2023	10:30 PM	
12	Tender Opening Date and Time	05 March 2023	01:30 PM	
13	Name & Address of the office(s) for selling, receiving and opening tender document	Procurement Section, BSMRAAU, Old Airport Building, Dhaka-1215.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
14	Brief Eligibility and Qualification of Tenderer	1. The Tenderer must possess a valid trade license, updated VAT and TAX certificate, up to-date bank solvency and other criteria as per tender document. 2. Pre-Bid Meeting: 28 February 2023, 1145 AM at BSMRAAU, Dhaka Campus.		
15	Lot No	Lot description	Location	Quantity
	1	SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF WORKSHOP TECHNOLOGY LAB FOR BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIBUR RAHMAN AVIATION AND AEROSPACE UNIVERSITY AT LALMONIRHAT CAMPUS	BSMRAAU Lalmonirhat Campus	As Per Tender Schedule
16	Tender Document Price	Tk 1500.00 (Taka One Thousand Five hundred Only) in the form of pay order / bank draft (non-refundable) from any scheduled bank of Bangladesh in favor of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University (BSMRAAU).		
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS				
17	Name Designation of Official Involving	Registrar, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Aviation and Aerospace University		
18	Contact Details Official Inviting Tender	Tel No: 55065078 Mobile: 01769995061	Web: www.bsmraau.edu.bd Email: procurement@bsmraau.edu.bd	
19	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason.			

GD-170

Narsingdi woman sees success in quail farming

GD-169



PHOTO: TAKEN FROM FACEBOOK

SIAM WINS National Film Award twice in a row

ZAHID AKBAR

Siam Ahmed started off the year with a bang, earning his second National Film Award, after already winning the prize in the 2020 edition of the award ceremony. This time, the actor has been announced as the winner in the 'Best Actor' category for his performance in the film, *Mridha Bonam Mridha*.

Last year, he received this honour for the first time, for his performance in *Bishwoshundori* (2020).

With films like *Shaan*, *Paap Punno*, *Operation Sundarban*, and *Damal*, he has amazed the audience with his versatile roles over the previous year.

In the beginning of 2023, his film *Adventure of Sundarban* hit theatres. The film also stars Pori Moni in a lead role. While the actor is busy gearing up for a new venture in Kolkata—where he will share the screen with the Tollywood superstar, Prosenjit Chatterjee—The Daily Star caught up with Siam to learn more about his upcoming work and his feelings after claiming the National Film Award.

"Awards are always inspiring for an artiste, I am happy and honoured to have gotten this prize twice in a row," shared the actor, "However, it would make me even happier, if Tariq Anam Khan sir would receive this

honour, as his contribution to the film took it to another level."

Siam dedicated the award to the entire team of *Mridha Bonam Mridha*.

While the film brought another dimension to narrative storytelling in the film industry, it did not do well in the box office. Now that Siam has bagged an award for the project, he believes that people should definitely watch this film. "*Mridha Bonam Mridha* sheds light on the psychological conflict between a father and a son. I think it is a great narrative that people can relate to their own lives," he adds, "The production is available on OTT, and I would urge people to watch the film."

Due to scheduling conflicts for the Tollywood film, Siam could not actively participate in the promotional campaign for *Adventure of Sundarban*. "I had to go to Kolkata, for the pre-production of the upcoming project I have signed with," shared Siam, who immediately engaged in campaigns throughout cinema halls, as soon as he returned to Dhaka. He also informed us that shooting for his Tollywood film, directed by Sayantan Ghoshal, will begin by the end of February.

During Siam's stay at Kolkata, he had posted a video on social media, where Prosenjit had wished him luck for his upcoming release. "It made me really proud and happy that Bumba *Da* himself had asked the audience to watch my film," told the actor. "I also got to spend a lot of time with him."

The Siam starrer film, *Antarjal* is slated for release in Eid-ul-Fitr. The cyber thriller project also features Bidya Sinha Mim, ABM Sumon and Sunerah Binte Kamal, among others.



6th edition of Dhaka Art Summit starts tomorrow

Dhaka Art Summit, Bangladesh's largest exhibition platform for art and architecture, will begin this Friday (February 3). The sixth edition will be based around the Bengali theme of *Bonna* (flood).

The event will feature over 160 local and international artists. Topics like climate change and gender relations will be a key focus in this year's event—which will run between February 3 and 11. A press conference was held yesterday, to share further details about the event.

The nine-day event will include workshops, performance seminars, and a variety of exhibitions, as well as the participation of renowned art critics and collectors from around the world.

'Poran' coming to Canada in February

Even seven months after its theatrical release, the craze for Raihan Rafi's *Poran* does not seem to be slowing down. Now, the Sariful Razz, Yash Rohan and Bidya Sinha Mim starrer is all set to appear in Canadian cinema halls, starting February 3.

The news was confirmed by the director of the film, Raihan Rafi himself.

After being screened in multiple cinema halls in the US and Australia, *Poran* will now be screened in twelve different cities in Canada, including Halifax, Toronto and Montreal, amongst others.



NEWS

Two Polish skiers dead in Indian Kashmir avalanche

AFP, Gulmarg

Two Polish nationals were killed and 21 other skiers were rescued from the site of an avalanche that hit the Indian resort of Gulmarg yesterday, police said.

A huge snowslide barrelled down from the 4,390-metre (14,400-foot) peak of Mount Apharwat in Indian-administered Kashmir and buried nearly two dozen people on the slope, all foreigners except for two local guides.

High-altitude rescue teams rushed to the site on snow scooters and retrieved the bodies of the two Polish skiers, police officer Amod Nagpuri told AFP.

Supply fuel oil

FROM PAGE 12

Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud, inviting him for an official visit to Saudi Arabia to review and expedite ongoing collaborations.

Momen appreciated and accepted the invitation, and said the visit schedule would be fixed through a diplomatic channel.

During the meeting, they discussed various other issues and expressed satisfaction at the state of relations flourishing rapidly in many fields including political, economic, trade and investment, security and defense, manpower, and other areas.

On the prospect of further employment in Saudi Arabia with reference to Neom city, Momen conveyed Bangladesh's readiness to provide skilled workers and technicians.

He also indicated that Bangladesh was ready to assign a dedicated university or training institute to upskill people in specialised trades to cater to the Kingdom's needs.

Momen urged the Saudi envoy to explore the possibility of prospective financing in the Eastern Refinery Unit-2 from Saudi Fund for Development.

Saudi Ambassador Essa Yousef Essa conveyed to Foreign Minister Momen Saudi Arabia's readiness to facilitate Bangladesh's proposal to set up a fertilizer industry in KSA.

Fitness sham

FROM PAGE 12

accidents, which saw a sharp rise in recent years.

THE CUMILLA CASE

Debashis Chowdhury, officer-in-charge of Cumilla Sadar South Police Station, said they seized the mini-truck when some men were preparing to commit a robbery using the vehicle.

Police arrested two of them and recovered some sharp weapons from their possession, the OC told The Daily Star last night, adding that the mini-truck was still in their custody.

A BRTA official told this correspondent yesterday that while the vehicle was impounded at the police station, Pranab Nag issued the fitness certificate to the unfit vehicle on November 23 without inspection, which is a negligence of duty and a gross violation of the authorities' order.

The authorities investigated the matter following a media report and took punitive action against the official as the allegation was found to be true, he added.

In July last year, BRTA suspended inspector Nur Mohammad Toha of Narayanganj circle for issuing fitness

Father held for going

FROM PAGE 12

"As the matter was not settled, we sent the child to Victim Support Centre. The court will decide on this," he said.

On Sunday, a Dhaka family court granted Japanese citizen Eriko Nakano custody of her two children — Nakano Jasmine Malika, 11, and Nakano Laila Lina, 9.

The court said it reached the decision, considering the well-being of the children. The same court also dismissed the case filed by Imran Sharif in February last year, seeking the custody of the children.

In her general diary, Eriko Nakano said she could not contact her younger daughter, who was staying with her father at his Gulshan residence before the court ruling, despite making several attempts. She said her mail to Imran got no reply.

Moreover, she claimed that the father and daughter weren't living in the house for the last two weeks.

Rab's Legal and Media Wing Director Commander Khandaker Al Moin told media that they had to intervene as the father went into

clearance to an impounded truck. The vehicle was seized after it got involved in an accident.

The truck ran over and killed three people, including an eight-month pregnant woman, in Mymensingh's Trishal upazila on July 16 last year. The vehicle was seized by police from the spot.

At that time, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder had told this newspaper that they were trying their level best to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and that they already sent out a strong message to all officials that stern actions would be taken if anyone was found involved in such incidents.

But a similar incident took place again.

This correspondent could not reach the BRTA chairman for comments as he didn't respond to calls yesterday.

A BRTA official said if a departmental probe finds an official to be involved in such irregularities, he may be handed a maximum punishment of sacking.

However, officials found guilty of such irregularities are often pardoned, he added.

hiding, defying the court order, without handing over the younger child to the mother.

In 2008, Eriko married Imran in Japan.

In 2021, he filed a divorce petition with a Japanese court, following which Imran took two of their daughters with him and came to Bangladesh.

Eriko too came to Bangladesh and filed a petition with the apex court for the custody of the children.

Longer-range

FROM PAGE 12

Kolomoisky dressed in a sweatsuit and looking on in the presence of an SBU security service officer at his home.

The SBU said it had uncovered the embezzlement of more than \$1 billion at Ukraine's biggest oil company, Ukrnafta, and its biggest refiner, Ukratnafta. Kolomoisky, who has long denied wrongdoing, once held stakes in both firms, which Zelensky ordered seized by the state in November under martial law.

Boeing bids adieu

FROM PAGE 12

and the actor John Travolta, who is certified as a pilot for the 747.

The jet has a unique legacy with a significance to aviation that is difficult to overstate.

The plane's size, flying range and efficacy "made it possible for the middle class to travel outside Europe or the United States at an affordable price, even during the energy shocks of the 1970s," said Michel Merluzeau, director of aerospace and defense analysis at AIR consultancy.

"It opened up the world," Merluzeau said.

Boeing built 1,574 747s in all. But the jet has over time been eclipsed by newer models that fly more efficiently and burn less fuel.

Commercial airlines in the United States have not flown the 747 since 2017.

PIL filed

FROM PAGE 12

Minister of state for power Nasrul Hamid visited the 1600MW Godda power plant in Jharkhand in early January and told reporters that from mid-March, Bangladesh would begin receiving electricity from the plant.

Myanmar junta

FROM PAGE 2

largely deserted.

Most buses on roads elsewhere in the city were empty and there was a heavy security presence.

It was similarly quiet in the second city of Mandalay, a resident told AFP. "There are a few people walking here and there in neighbourhoods but almost no activity on the main roads," the resident said, requesting anonymity.

Local media images also showed empty streets in the eastern city of Mawlamyine.

Around 200 supporters of the military marched through Yangon's historic downtown in the early afternoon, escorted part of the way by soldiers, correspondents said.

The US embassy in the city warned of "increased anti-regime activity and violence" in the days around the anniversary.

Around 400 protesters gathered outside Myanmar's embassy in Bangkok, some chanting slogans against the military and holding portraits of Suu Kyi.

Missing candidate's family

FROM PAGE 1

Meherin said they could not take part in the election campaign for the last 7-8 days. "If my husband were not missing, we would have won the polls."

Asif's wife went to the poll center but did not cast her vote. "I saw agents of Abdus Sattar Bhuiyan forcing [voters] to vote for him in the presence of the presiding officer."

Meherin said she requested the administration to take action but to no avail.

Voters do not have any faith in the election commission, she added.

She further said the people of the constituency rejected the election and the main opponent was missing.

FBI searches Biden's house

FROM PAGE 12

Biden, who is expected to announce a re-election campaign in the coming weeks or months. It has stripped him and fellow Democrats of a weapon against former President Donald Trump, who also had classified documents found at his home.

Trump has launched his own re-election campaign and could face Biden in the 2024 general election.

Bauer said the Department of Justice chose to do the search

"They showed their support for Asif."

Meherin e-mailed a complaint to Chief Election Commissioner Kazi Habibul Awal about her husband going missing.

On Tuesday, Election Commissioner Anisur Rahman said they received a probe report from the deputy commissioner, the superintendent of police and the election officer of Brahmanbaria.

"Based on the information available, it seems that the candidate may have gone into hiding."

He said the local administration in its report said that the candidate was "missing" and it was sure that law enforcement agencies had no links with the incident.

without advance notice to the public.

"Under DOJ's standard procedures, in the interests of operational security and integrity, it sought to do this work without advance public notice, and we agreed to cooperate," he said.

"The search today is a further step in a thorough and timely DOJ process we will continue to fully support and facilitate. We will have further information at the conclusion of today's search."

Haji package

FROM PAGE 1

President M Shahadat Hossain Taslim, told The Daily Star.

He said the private agencies will fix their package rates in conformity with those of the government's.

About the rise in the haji package rates, the state minister said one Saudi Riyal is being sold for Tk 30 this year against last year's Tk 21.

Faridul said the government has fixed this year's plane fare at Tk 197,797 as the ticket price has gone up due to the global economic crisis. Last year, the plane fare was Tk 140 lakh.

Like the previous year, three airlines — Biman Bangladesh Airlines, Saudia Airlines and Flynas — will carry the haji pilgrims this year.

The haji is likely to be held on June 27, subject to sighting of the moon.

The government on January 9 signed an agreement with Saudi Arabia on haji. According to the deal, 15,000 Bangladeshis will perform

haji this year under government management while 1,12,198 under private management.

Biman will carry 50 percent passengers while the two Saudi carriers will transport the rest of the pilgrims.

The Saudi government has lifted the age limit for haji pilgrims this year, paving the way for people over 65 to go for the pilgrimage.

According to the "Route to Makkah Initiative" deal, all Bangladeshi haji pilgrims who would fly from Dhaka will complete their pre-arrival immigration in Dhaka.

Depending on the Covid situation, the Saudi authorities can take a decision on the number of the pilgrims.

In 2022, a total of 57,585 Bangladeshis performed haji. The figure was around 1.27 lakh in 2019.

Due to the pandemic, the largest annual Muslim congregation was held on a limited scale in the last two years.

DEFENCE BUDGET

India raises
spending by
13 percent

REUTERS, New Delhi

India yesterday proposed 5.94 trillion rupees (\$72.6 billion) in defence spending for the 2023-24 financial year, 13 percent up from the previous period's initial estimates, aiming to add more fighter jets and roads along its tense border with China.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated 1.63 trillion rupees for defence capital outlays - an expenditure that would include new weapons, aircraft, warships and other military hardware, as she unveiled nearly \$550 billion of total federal spending in the annual budget for 2023-24 starting in April.

She said 2.77 trillion rupees would be devoted to military salaries and benefits in 2023-24, 1.38 trillion on pensions for retired soldiers, and further amounts for miscellaneous items.

Sitharaman also revised the defence budget for the current financial year ending in March to 5.85 trillion rupees from earlier estimates of 5.25 trillion.

In the past few years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ramped up spending to modernise the military, while underlining his government's commitment to boosting domestic production to supply forces deployed along two contentious borders.

The total Indian defence budget, estimated at about 2% of GDP, is still lower than China's 1.45 trillion yuan (\$230 billion) in allocations for 2022.

India plans to spend near 242 billion rupees (\$3 billion) for naval fleet construction and 571.4 billion rupees (\$7 billion) for air force procurements including more aircraft, the latest budget document showed.



Striking workers attend a march, in London, Britain. Half a million workers went on strike in Britain yesterday, calling for higher wages in the largest such walkout in over a decade, closing schools and severely disrupting transport.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Bush ordered CIA to find
replacement for Arafat: report

AL JAZEERA ONLINE

Former United States President George W Bush ordered the CIA to search for a replacement for Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat after the escalation of the second Intifada in 2001, the BBC said, quoting recently released British documents.

The US effort came after the failure of the Camp David negotiations in 2000 between Arafat and then-Israeli PM Ehud Barak.

When Bush was inaugurated in January 2001, the second Palestinian uprising was at its height. The Bush administration called on Arafat to stop the uprising.

After the negotiations were aborted, telephone talks were held between Bush and then-British PM Tony Blair, who, according to the talsk, said Arafat was a liability.

Bush endorsed what Blair had said, then described Arafat as "weak and useless". He revealed that he had asked the CIA to search for possible successors to the Palestinian leader but said that the agency "researched the Palestinian scene thoroughly and concluded that there is no successor available".

The British documents revealed that the US secretary of state at the time, Colin Powell, did not agree with Bush's search for a replacement for Arafat.

MOSQUE BLAST

23 suspects
arrested in
Pakistan

AFP, Peshawar

Police in Pakistan have detained 23 people in connection to a blast at a mosque inside a police headquarters that killed 101 people, a senior official who asked not to be named said yesterday.

Authorities are also probing the possibility that people inside the compound helped to coordinate the attack, the senior provincial police official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

A suicide bomber slipped undetected into a highly sensitive compound in northwest Peshawar and detonated explosives among a row of worshippers in the compound's mosque on Monday, causing a wall to collapse and crush officers.

"We have detained people from the police line (headquarters) to get to the bottom of how the explosive material made its way in and to see if any police officials were also involved in the attack," the senior official said.

"The attacker and facilitators might have had links outside Pakistan."

He said some among the 23 detained were also from the city and nearby former tribal areas which border Afghanistan.

Trees could cut urban
heatwave mortality by
a third: study

AFP, Paris

Planting more trees in urban areas to lower summertime temperatures could decrease deaths directly linked to hot weather and heatwaves by a third, researchers said yesterday. Modelling found that increasing tree cover to 30 percent would shave off 0.4 degrees Celsius (0.7 degrees Fahrenheit) locally, on average, during hot summer months, they reported in The Lancet. Cities record higher temperatures than surrounding suburbs or countryside due to the so-called urban heat island effect. This extra heat is caused primarily by a lack of vegetation, exhaust from air conditioning systems, along with dark-hued asphalt and building materials that absorb and trap warmth.

Saudi executions up
sharply under King
Salman, MBS: report

AFP, Dubai

Executions in Saudi Arabia have nearly doubled under King Salman and his son, de facto ruler Mohammed bin Salman, activist groups said on Tuesday, detailing cases of torture and other human rights violations. Capital punishment has soared from an average of 70.8 executions a year from 2010 to 2014, to 129.5 a year since King Salman took power in 2015, according to a report by Reprieve and the European Saudi Organisation for Human Rights (ESOHR). More than 1,000 death sentences have been carried out under the current leadership, the NGOs said, after verifying official announcements with investigations and interviews with lawyers, family members and activists. Saudi Arabia executed 147 people last year, the report said, a figure confirmed by an AFP tally compiled from government announcements.

ChatGPT maker fields tool for
spotting AI-written text

AFP, San Francisco

Creators of a ChatGPT bot causing a stir for its ability to mimic human writing on Tuesday released a tool designed to detect when written works are authored by artificial intelligence.

The announcement came amid intense debate at schools and universities in the United States and around the world over concerns that the software can be used to assist students with assignments and help them cheat during exams.

US-based OpenAI said in a blog post Tuesday that its detection tool has been trained "to distinguish between text written by a human and text written by AIs from a variety of providers."



The bot from OpenAI, which recently received a massive cash injection from Microsoft, responds to simple prompts with reams of text inspired by data gathered on the internet.

OpenAI cautioned that its tool can make mistakes, particularly with texts containing fewer than 1,000 characters.

"While it is impossible to reliably detect all AI-written text, we believe good classifiers can inform mitigations for false claims that AI-generated text was written by a human," OpenAI said in the post.

A top French university last week forbade students from using ChatGPT to complete assignments.

The decision came shortly after word that ChatGPT had passed exams at a US law school after writing essays on topics ranging from constitutional law to taxation.

Officials in New York and other jurisdictions have forbidden its use in schools. A group of Australian universities have said they would change exam formats to banish AI tools and regard them as cheating.



JAHANGIRNAGAR UNIVERSITY

Department of Microbiology

Savar, Dhaka 1342, Bangladesh

INVITATION FOR TENDERS (IFT)

Ref No. JU/Microb/DGHS/OTM

Date: 02.02.2023

1	Division/Ministry	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare		
2	Agency	Directorate General of Health Services		
3	Procuring Entity Name	Dr. Nafisa Azmuda, Associate Professor, Project Director, "Assessment of vaccine candidate strains.....analysis and immunogenicity studies" Project, Department of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.		
4	Invitation for	Supplying, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment, etc.		
5	Invitation Ref. No.	JU/Microb/DGHS/OTM		
6	Procurement Method	National Competitive Tender	Open Tendering Method	
7	Budget and Source of Funds	Bangladesh Govt.		
8	Project/Program Name (if applicable)	"Assessment of vaccine candidate strains for the disease 'Shigellosis' by genome-wide pathogenicity analysis and immunogenicity studies" Project		
9	Tender Package No.	Microb/DGHS/OTM-1		
10	Tender Package Name	Supplying, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment, etc.		
11	Tender Publication Date	02.02.2023	Time	
12	Tender Last Selling Date	19.02.2023	2:00 PM	
13	Tender Closing Date and Time	20.02.2023	2:00 PM	
14	Tender Opening Date and Time	20.02.2023	2:30 PM	
15	Name and Address of the office(s)	Dr. Nafisa Azmuda, Associate Professor, Project Director, "Assessment of vaccine candidate strains analysis and immunogenicity studies" Project, Department of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.		
15	Selling Tender Document (Principal and Others)			

NO CONDITIONS APPLY FOR SALE, PURCHASE OR DISTRIBUTION OF TENDER DOCUMENTS

16	Eligibility of Tenderer	The Tenderer shall have: • The Tenderer shall have a minimum of three (03) years of overall experience in Supplying, Installation, Testing & Commissioning Laboratory Equipment, etc. • The Tenderer shall have satisfactorily completed similar Goods/ works/supply/establishment of a minimum of 12,50,000.00 (Taka Twelve lakhs Fifty Thousand) under a single contract in the last three (03) years, i. e., years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper. Only Completion Certificate will be considered. • The Tenderer shall have a minimum amount of liquid assets, working capital, or credit facility of 17,00,000.00 (Taka Seventeen Lakhs).		
17	Brief Description of Goods or Works	Supplying, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Laboratory Equipment, etc.		
18	Price of Tender Document (Taka)	Cash 2,000/- (Taka two thousand) non-refundable.		
19	Lot No.	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Taka)
		Supplying, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of Laboratory Equipments, etc.	Dept. of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka 1342, Bangladesh.	1,80,000.00 (Taka One lakh and Eighty Thousand BDT only).
				Three (03) weeks from the date of contract signature.
20	Name of Official Inviting Tender	Dr. Nafisa Azmuda		
21	Designation of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director, "Assessment of vaccine candidate strains analysis and immunogenicity studies" Project, Department of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.		
22	Address of Official Inviting Tender	Project Director, "Assessment of vaccine candidate strains analysis and immunogenicity studies" Project, Department of Microbiology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka-1342.		
23	Contact Details of Official Inviting Tender	Phone:+88-7791045-51, Ext.-1566	Fax: +880-2-7791052	E-mail:azmuda@juniv.edu
24	The procuring entity reserves the right to accept or reject all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.			

Dr. Nafisa Azmuda

Project Director & Associate Professor

"Assessment of vaccine candidate strains analysis and immunogenicity studies" Project.

Department of Microbiology

Jahangirnagar University

Savar, Dhaka-1342, Bangladesh.

GD-168



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

নির্বাহী পরিচালকের কার্যালয়

তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ড

মার্কেটিং ও জিনিং শাখা

খামারবাড়ি, ফার্মগেট, ঢাকা-১২১৫।



কুমিই সমৃদ্ধি

১৮ মাঘ ১৪২৯

তারিখ: ০১ ফেব্রুয়ারি ২০২৩

বিজ্ঞপ্তি

বিষয়: তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের ক্রয়কৃত/উৎপাদিত আঁশতুলা পুনঃ (৩য় বার) বিক্রয়ের জরুরী বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ।

এতদ্বারা আত্মহী টেক্সটাইল মিলস/জিনিং প্রতিষ্ঠান/তুলা আমদানীকারক/ব্যবসায়ীদের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের অধীনস্থ নিম্নলিখিত ১১টি জিনিং কেন্দ্রের গুদামে মজুদ ২০২১-২২ মৌসুমের ক্রয়কৃত/উৎপাদিত ২,০২,৫১৯.৮৩ পাউন্ড টেক্সটাইল মিলে ব্যবহার উপযোগী সমভূমি জাতের আঁশতুলা মজুদ রয়েছে। উক্ত আঁশতুলা বিক্রয়ের উদ্দেশ্যে আত্মহী ক্রেতাদের নিকট থেকে কতিপয় শর্ত সাপেক্ষে আবেদনপত্র আহবান করা যাচ্ছে। আবেদনপত্র নির্বাহী পরিচালক, তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ড, খামারবাড়ি, ফার্মগেট, ঢাকা-১২১৫ ঠিকানায় প্রতিষ্ঠান/সংস্থার নিজস্ব প্যাডে দাখিল করতে হবে।

সরকার কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আঁশতুলার মূল্য

ক্র. নং	বেলিং/নন-বেলিং	আমেরিকান জাতের আঁশতুলা	
		পরিমাণ	মূল্য
১.	বেলিংকৃত (প্রতি বেল = ১৪০ কেজি)	আঁশতুলার মূল্য (প্রতি পাউন্ড)	৭০.১২ টাকা
		ভ্যাট (৭.৫%)	৬.৩৮ টাকা
		উৎসে কর (১০%)	৮.৫০ টাকা
		মোট (ভ্যাট ও উৎসে করসহ)	৮৫.০০ টাকা
		আঁশতুলার মূল্য (প্রতি পাউন্ড)	৬৯.৩০ টাকা
২.	নন-বেলিংকৃত	ভ্যাট (৭.৫%)	৬.৩৮ টাকা
		উৎসে কর (১০%)	৮.৪০ টাকা
		মোট (ভ্যাট ও উৎসে করসহ)	৮৪.০০ টাকা

কেন্দ্র ভিত্তিক মজুদ আঁশতুলার পরিমাণ

ক্র. নং	কেন্দ্রের নাম	আমেরিকান জাতের আঁশতুলার পরিমাণ	
		বেলিংকৃত (পাউন্ড)	নন-বেলিংকৃত (পাউন্ড)
১	তুলা গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, শ্রীপুর, গাজীপুর	৫৭৩৪৪.৬৪	--
২	পীরগঞ্জ জিনিং কেন্দ্র, পীরগঞ্জ, রংপুর	৭৭৩৮.২২	--
৩	তুলা গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, মহিগঞ্জ, রংপুর	১০২৩৬.৩২	--
৪	শেরপুর জিনিং কেন্দ্র, শেরপুর, বগুড়া	৭৬০৭.০৪	--
৫	তুলা গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, সদরপুর, দিনাজপুর	২৭৭১৬.৪৮	--
৬	মেহেরপুর জিনিং কেন্দ্র, মেহেরপুর	১৫৬৭২.৮৬	-
৭	বিকরগাছা জিনিং কেন্দ্র, যশোর	১৫১৯৭.৮১	--
৮	তুলা গবেষণা কেন্দ্র, জগদীপুর, যশোর	৫০৮৭৫.৩৫	--
৯	বাঘাতিপাড়া জিনিং কেন্দ্র, নাটোর	--	৭,৬৭০.৭৫
১০	পা. তুলা গ. উপ-কেন্দ্র, বেইশা, বান্দরবান	--	২,২৫৭.২৭
১১	পা. তুলা গ. উপ-কেন্দ্র, মাটিরাঙ্গা, খাগড়াছড়ি	--	২০৩.০৯

সর্বমোট =

১,৯২,৩৮৮.৭২

১০,১৩১.১১

এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রতিক্রিয়া প্রথম প্রকাশের দিন থেকে পরবর্তী ০৭(সাত) কার্যদিবস পর্যন্ত আঁশতুলা বরাদ্দের আবেদনপত্র গ্রহণ করা হবে। আবেদনকারীর সংখ্যা অধিক হলে আগে আসলে আগে পাবেন ভিত্তিতে আঁশতুলা বরাদ্দ করা হবে। আবেদনকারী যে পরিমাণ আঁশতুলা ক্রয় করতে ইচ্ছুক তার মোট মূল্যের ৫% অর্থ অগ্রিম হিসেবে নির্বাহী পরিচালক, তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ড, খামারবাড়ি, ঢাকা-এর অনুকূলে ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/পে-অর্ডার আকারে আবেদনপত্রের সাথে জমা দিতে হবে। অন্যথায় আবেদনপত্র বিবেচনা করা হবে না। নিলামে প্রাপ্ত আঁশতুলা ক্রয়কারী তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ডের ১১টি জিনিং কেন্দ্রের গুদামে সংশ্লিষ্ট আঁশতুলা (বেলিং ও নন-বেলিংকৃত) নিজ খরচে পরিবহন করবেন। আঁশতুলা বরাদ্দের অন্যান্য শর্তাবলী নির্বাহী পরিচালক, তুলা উন্নয়ন বোর্ড, খামারবাড়ি, ঢাকা এর কার্যালয়ের মার্কেটিং ও জিনিং শাখা হতে বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশের দিন থেকে ০৭(সাত) দিন পর্যন্ত অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে জানা যাবে।



১-২-২০২৩

ড. মো: ফখরে আলম ইবনে তাবিব

নির্বাহী পরিচালক (চলতি দায়িত্ব)

ফোন: ৫৫০২৮৩৫৫

ইমেইল: ed@cdb.gov.bd

জিডি-১৬৬

Spare a thought for general power users

Another round of price hike will increase public suffering

It seems almost pointless to ask if there is any plan at all – beyond putting all the financial burden on ordinary citizens – to address the difficulty caused by the volatility in international fuel prices. Yet, we must, for the situation has gone totally out of control. The government on Tuesday again increased electricity price by 5 percent at the retail level – for the second time in 19 days – which means that a consumer who paid Tk 1,000 a month, for example, will now have to pay Tk 1,100 for the same amount of electricity.

The latest hike comes a day after an amendment bill was passed in parliament – following a cabinet decision a month before – paving the way for the government to fix all kinds of energy prices without a public hearing, as was the norm before. One may also recall the decision, on January 18, to raise the retail prices of gas by 14.5 to 178.9 percent for industries, power plants and commercial establishments. All this is part of a drive to wean the power sector off subsidies and let consumers – households and industries alike – bear the burden. But for the fixed-income people, this is becoming too much to bear, as the frequent hikes in prices of utilities in recent months also caused prices of almost all essentials and services to rise uncontrollably.

One shudders to think what the situation will be like if this trend continues. Nasrul Hamid, the state minister for power, energy and mineral resources, did suggest that the government will “adjust” electricity price every month depending on the international market, meaning power consumption may become even costlier going forward. The question is, will price adjustment only mean price increase? What if international prices go down? Will the government be as interested in bringing down prices as it is in pushing them up? Why are domestic prices so rarely revised down?

Experts have rightly questioned the government’s approach to the problem. They said that the government lacks a clear strategy for tackling the impacts of the volatility in international market or bringing down subsidies. We must also question the tendency to put the price burden on consumers, instead of curbing corruption and unreasonable expenses on the electricity production side, which could have saved a lot of money. There is, experts believe, a lot of ways to cut the government’s financial burden like preventing system loss, sharing the burden with the power producers, etc. So why is it pushing the burden on consumers instead?

We urge the government to adopt a proactive rather than reactive approach to the fuel price issue – in which, as well as revising domestic prices in line with international prices, the government will undertake measures to avoid being so vulnerable in the first place. For that, we must first reduce our overdependence on fuel imports, and start exploring our own gas reserves. We must also prevent all kinds of system losses. The authorities must consider other ways of handling this problem to reduce the suffering of ordinary citizens.

Save Ichhamati from impending doom

Why are authorities so negligent in saving rivers from polluters and encroachers?

Every time we call for the protection of our rivers in this column, we do so with a heavy heart and diminishing hope. Over the last two decades, at least 43 rivers of the country have dried up. The rivers that exist now are only surviving, gasping for “breath” amid all the pollution and encroachment to which they are routinely subjected. Meanwhile, citizens are being deprived of the life-enriching benefits of rivers as they head toward slow deaths. A recent report by this daily has once again brought this issue to the fore, as it highlighted the plight of Ichhamati river. Even the Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has reportedly admitted that encroachment and pollution have “changed the shape of the river,” with sand also being illegally extracted from the river by traders.

But what we really want to know from the BWDB authorities is the status of the two projects that they undertook in 2021 to increase the river’s navigability and evict illegal structures built on its banks. Reportedly, these projects had all but failed. The company in charge of the dredging project, TTSL, abandoned the site after completing only 30 percent of the work, leading to the excavated part of the river being covered with silt again. The eviction drive, meanwhile, was halted due to cases filed by encroachers, and in the face of stay orders issued by the court.

According to our report, at least 400 trucks of waste have been removed by the Rangania municipal authority from the Roajarhat point of Ichhamati alone, which will hardly have an effect as enormous piles of waste continue to be dumped into the river by industries and households. All this is, we must point out, in violation of the Bangladesh Environment Conservation Act 1995, which declares river encroachment and pollution as criminal offences. In another disappointing turn, on December 15, the National River Conservation Commission (NRCC) decided to not reveal the names of 37,000 encroachers of 48 rivers, which activists have rightly termed as being synonymous with supporting the river-grabbers.

We wonder whether our authorities are at all sincere about saving the country’s rivers. Their efforts have been so poorly planned and executed and so uncoordinated that any resultant effect fizzled out before it could be visible. As a photo of a purple-dyed Buriganga river in the capital city – featured on *The Daily Star’s* February 1 front page – demonstrates, soon there may not be much that we can do to save our rivers, which calls for urgent interventions from the government.

We urge the relevant authorities, including the NRCC and BWDB, to perform their respective responsibilities with sincerity and a sense of urgency. They must recover rivers from the clutches of encroachers and polluters. Given the present reality, they must do so on a war footing.



VISUAL: TEENI AND TUNI

Modi’s patronisation of Adani and its cost for Bangladesh



Kallol Mustafa is an engineer and writer who focuses on Power, Energy, Environment and Development Economics.

KALLOL MUSTAFA

India’s presence in Bangladesh’s power and energy sector is increasing day by day. Currently, Bangladesh is importing 1,160MW of electricity from India. In addition to this, Bangladesh will buy 1,496MW of electricity from Adani Power Ltd for 25 years, under a contract signed by the Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB) in 2017. According to a report published by *The Daily Star* (January 4, 2023), Bangladesh will start getting electricity from India’s Adani Godda Power Plant in March.

Whether this power import from Adani Godda Coal-Fired Power Plant would be beneficial for Bangladesh has been in discussion for a while now. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), in its 2018 report titled “Adani Godda power project: Too expensive, too late, and too risky for Bangladesh,” dubbed this power import as “too expensive and a poor strategic fit for Bangladesh.” According to its analysis, the reason for this relatively higher price is, instead of the local coal, Adani will use the coal imported from its stranded Carmichael coal mine in Australia. The imported coal will then be transported for 700km by railway from the seaport to the Godda Power Plant in the Jharkhand state of India. And all these costs will be passed on to Bangladesh, thanks to the favourable power purchase agreement for Adani.

Recently, this debate came to the fore again after the US-based *The Washington Post* published a news article titled “How political will often favours a coal billionaire and his dirty fossil fuel.” In this report, the Adani Group’s coal power export agreement with Bangladesh has been highlighted as an example of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s extraordinary patronage for the conglomerate, which has even crossed the borders. Citing a source from the Indian foreign ministry, the report mentioned that, during his first visit to Bangladesh in June 2015, Modi asked Bangladesh to “facilitate the entry of Indian companies in the power generation, transmission and distribution sector of Bangladesh,” one of the beneficiaries of which is the Adani Group.

Although the government claims that the power import deal signed afterwards with Adani, on the basis of unsolicited proposals under the controversial Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act, 2010, is beneficial for Bangladesh (*Prothom Alo*, June 10, 2015), after having the confidential 163-page power purchase agreement reviewed by three industry analysts, *The Washington Post* concluded that “the 25-year Godda deal is hardly

favourable for Bangladesh.”

First, Bangladesh must pay Adani Power Plant roughly USD 450 million a year in capacity and maintenance charges, regardless of whether it generates any electricity, which is very high by the industry standards. Second, the coal to fuel the power plant will be transported on an Adani-owned ship from Australia to an Adani-owned port in eastern India, then it will be transported to the plant on a stretch of Adani-built railway. The electricity generated will be sent to the border through an Adani-built high-voltage transmission line. As per the contract, shipping and transmission costs will be fully passed on to Bangladesh. Third, while other agreements with foreign power suppliers include clauses that would put a cap on the prices Bangladesh would pay if the cost of coal crossed a certain threshold, the Adani agreement stipulates that Bangladesh will pay the market price, according to *The Washington Post* report.

Although the government claims that the power import deal signed with Adani, on the basis of unsolicited proposals under the controversial Quick Enhancement of Electricity and Energy Supply (Special Provision) Act, 2010, is beneficial for Bangladesh, after having the confidential 163-page power purchase agreement reviewed by three industry analysts, *The Washington Post* concluded that “the 25-year Godda deal is hardly favourable for Bangladesh.”

Currently, Bangladesh’s electricity generation capacity is 22,700MW as of January 31, 2023, according to the BPDB. This capacity is being increased further – if the power plants under construction are commissioned, the generation capacity will increase by 13,000MW in the next four years. But so far, the highest generation was 14,782MW in April 2022. The average generation is 13,000MW in summer, which further decreases to 9,000-10,000 MW in winter. That means a large part of Bangladesh’s power generation capacity remains idle throughout the year. But the BPDB has to pay capacity charges or rent for the power plants according to the contract, even if no power is generated. From FY 2010-11 to FY 2021-22, about

Tk 90,000 crore has been paid in capacity charges (*Samakal*, July 25, 2022).

In the context of such a huge surplus generation capacity, even the current 1,160MW of electricity import from India needs to be discontinued to save foreign currency, let alone import an additional 1,496MW from Adani at an exorbitant cost. To import electricity

And to phase out the oil-based power plants, if Bangladesh needs to import power from the Adani Group, spending valuable foreign currency, then what was the reason for constructing so many large power plants inside the country? Not only that, the capacity payment to the local private power plant owners is already a burden on our economy; now, if the

Corruption allegations against Adani are nothing new. Earlier in 2016, India’s Directorate of Revenue Intelligence accused 40 Indian power companies, including five Adani subsidiaries, of inflating the price of coal imports from Indonesia to hide profits in overseas tax havens, according to a 2016 report by *The Guardian*. Then how can we be sure that a corrupted conglomerate like Adani will not do the same while importing coal for Godda Power plant in order to extract more money from Bangladesh?

from India, Bangladesh currently has to pay about Tk 1,500 crore as annual capacity charges. From 2013-14 to 2019-20, Tk 6,920 crore have been paid to India (*Samakal*, May 7, 2022). On top of that, if Bangladesh imports an additional 1,496MW of electricity from India’s Adani Group for 25 years, it will only increase the pressure on our forex reserves. When Adani’s power will be ready to be supplied to Bangladesh, two situations may arise: either Bangladesh will have to keep more local power plants idle and pay capacity charges, even if those power plants’ electricity generation costs are lower than Adani, or Bangladesh will have to pay capacity charges to Adani in foreign currency without buying any electricity. Both situations are harmful for Bangladesh’s economy. In both cases, the BPDB’s cost of buying electricity will increase further, which in turn will create pressure to hike the electricity price even more.

The power department claims that Adani’s electricity will be cheaper than that produced by the local oil-based power plant, so this electricity import is beneficial for the country, according to *Samakal’s* May 7, 2022 report. This argument is not valid, because due to the increase in the price of coal in the world market and the absence of a cap on the coal pricing in the agreement, Adani’s electricity price, which was initially estimated to be Tk 8.71, will be at least Tk 17, as per government sources, and up to Tk 24.28, according to recent news reports. Whereas, currently, furnace oil-based power costs around Tk 15 per unit, according to a report by *The Business Standard*.

Moreover, the phase-out of the oil-based power plants is already long overdue, and to make it happen, gas- and renewable energy-based power plants need to be built within the country. And that is why it is very important to take proper initiatives to increase the national capacity in gas extraction from the country’s offshore and onshore gas blocks and build solar- and wind-based power plants as many as possible. Importing electricity from India is not beneficial in terms of energy security and the overall economic stability of Bangladesh.

capacity payment in foreign currency is added to that burden, then it will become unbearable. According to a report co-published by the Bangladesh Working Group on External Debt (BWGED) and India’s Growthwatch, Bangladesh will have to pay around USD 11.01 billion in capacity charges to Adani power over its 25 years of agreement, with which Bangladesh could build three Padma Bridges, nine Karnaphuli River Tunnels, or four metro rails.

Bangladesh is going to pay such a high price in the name of importing power from Adani, which is currently in big financial trouble due to allegations of “brazen stock manipulation and accounting fraud scheme over the course of decades,” made by a New York-based activist investment firm Hindenburg Research.

Corruption allegations against Adani are nothing new. Earlier in 2016, India’s Directorate of Revenue Intelligence accused 40 Indian power companies, including five Adani subsidiaries, of inflating the price of coal imports from Indonesia to hide profits in overseas tax havens, according to a 2016 report by *The Guardian*. Then how can we be sure that a corrupted conglomerate like Adani will not do the same while importing coal for Godda Power plant in order to extract more money from Bangladesh?

Most importantly, apart from economic considerations, from geopolitical and strategic points of view, it is dangerous for a relatively small country like Bangladesh to increase its dependence on a big neighbouring country for strategic goods like electricity and energy. The ups and downs of the Russia-Ukraine relationship can be a good cautionary tale for Bangladesh.

It is widely believed that the Adani Group, as one of the largest business conglomerates in India, is getting exclusive support from the Indian prime minister. This unnecessary and expensive power import by Bangladesh from the Godda Power Plant will be cited by international observers as an example of Modi’s patronisation of Adani even outside the Indian border.

GOLAM MORTOZA

Let alone the developed countries,

Meanwhile, India (3.08 percent), Pakistan (2.76 percent), Afghanistan (3.93 percent), Maldives (4.25 percent), Nepal (5.10 percent) and Sri Lanka (2.81 percent) have significantly higher spendings in education.

After “Digital Bangladesh,” we are now talking about “Smart Bangladesh.” It’s great as a slogan.

We are doing well in food production – our farmers produce food for about 170 million people. However, our farmers' individual efforts shine much brighter than that of the government. The Awami League government's success in ensuring that our farmers get fertilisers, seeds and irrigation facilities is greater than any other government. And yet, a farmer is handcuffed for defaulting on the payment of a Tk 40,000 loan.

Another big foreign exchange earner for us is the ready-made garment (RMG) sector. The owners of RMG factories here surely deserve praise. They are competing against

Thus, the number of poor and hungry keeps growing. "We are doing well" – this statement can only be found in songs, speeches and slogans.

TASNEEM TAYEB

The answer lies in the thriving online cybercrime marketplace in Cambodia. One of the top corrupt countries in Asia, according to Transparency International's 2022, Cambodia provides the perfect breeding ground for sleazy businesses, including cybercrimes. As many as 100,000 could be involved with the

The recent surge in human trafficking to Cambodia from Bangladesh raises certain questions about the intentions and capability

Our migrant workers are our assets; the remittance they send home keeps our forex reserves strong. The least we can do is ensure they have a safe and conducive environment when they go abroad in search of jobs, because clearly it is due to our own inability to provide for them that they are having to make these desperate journeys into uncharted territories. We must own up our responsibilities.

Bangladesh Bank

Common Services Department-1

(Equipment Section)

Head Office

Dhaka-1000.

Website: www.bb.org.bd

Invitation for Tenders

Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka

1	Procuring Entity name	Bangladesh Bank
2	Procuring Entity code	Not used present
3.	Procuring Entity district	Dhaka
4	Invitation for	Procurement of Original HP Black Print Cartridge for HP Laser Jet Pro M404dn Printer of Bangladesh Bank, Head Office, Dhaka.
5	Invitation ref no	CSD-1 (Equip)69(3)/2023-110
6	Date	31/01/2023

Key Information

7	Procurement Method	Open Tendering Method
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Funding Information

8	Budget and source of funds	Own Source
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Particular Information

		Date	
9	Tender publication date	31/01/2023	
10	Tender last selling date	Not applicable	
		Date	Time
11	Tender closing date and time	14/02/2023	02:00PM
12	Tender opening date and time	14/02/2023	02:30PM
13	Name & address of the office(s)	Address	
	-Receiving tender document	BB website and hard copy of Tender Security	
	-Opening tender document	Common Services Department-1, 6 th Floor, Annex-2 Building, Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka.	

Information for Tenderer

14	Brief Eligibility of Tenderer	Tenderers having 5 years overall business experience and minimum specific experience as supplier in supply of similar goods of at least 3 (three) contract(s) of similar nature successfully completed within the last 3 (three) years.		
15	Brief description of goods or works	Supply of 300 (Three hundred) PCs Original HP Black Print Cartridge (76A) for HP Laser Jet Pro M404dn Printer of Bangladesh Bank, Head Office.		
16	Lot No	Identification of Lot	Location	Tender Security Amount (Tk)
	1	Original HP Black Print Cartridge (CF276A) for HP Laser Jet Pro M404dn Printer	CSD-1	Tk. 1,00,000.00
				Completion time in Weeks/ Months from the date of contract signing/Award of Contract
				8 Weeks

Procuring Entity Details

17	Name of official inviting tender	Shafayet Arefin		
18	Designation of official inviting tender	Director		
19	Address of official inviting tender	Common Services Department-1, Bangladesh Bank, Head office, Dhaka.		
20	Contact details of official inviting tender	Tel: 9530148	Fax: 9530120	E-mail: shafayet.arefin@bb.org.bd
21	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender proceedings			

ব্যাংকিং ও আর্থিক সেবা পেতে হওয়ার শিকার হলে কিংবা
কোনো অভিযোগ থাকলে ১৬২৩৬ নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Shafayet Arefin

Director

Phone: 9530148,

E-mail: shafayet.arefin@bb.org.bd

DCP: 48/2023-408

Date: 01-02-2023

GD-171

FEATURE

Surviving in a stagnant industry

“By doing some research, I saw which books were doing better in the market and sent those specific ones to print. I did not need to stick to the fixed [volume of] 300 to 500 books. It minimised costs.”

MAISHA SYEDA

With the recent emergence of Artificial Intelligence-run writing platforms, there comes the growing fear of work in the publishing industry becoming obsolete—an industry already becoming increasingly stagnated in Bangladesh. Preexisting publishers are struggling to sustain in the market since the Covid-19 and the recent rise in paper prices. How are smaller and emerging publishers faring?

Rumman Tarshfiq, publisher of Pendulum Books, shares that from 2020 to 2021, when the demand for books dropped drastically, producing 50 books still yielded the same costs as

compared to even a few years ago, so the paper which I was buying at BDT 1,600, was now costing me BDT 3,700.” It was hard to ensure how many books would sell to help them break even.

“We decided to buy a POD machine.” Tarshfiq explains that adapting to the print-on-demand system secured for her the leeway to produce smaller quantities of a book in a catered way, depending on market demand.

“By doing some research, I saw which books were doing better in the market and could easily send those specific ones to print. I did not need to stick to the fixed [volume of] 300 to 500 books. It allowed me to minimise cost, which ultimately helped me

360-degree solution—providing editing, translating and writing assistance to other publishers and individuals. Their repertoire of publications is not vast, having produced only nine books until last year. Two fresh titles by Professor Salimullah Khan and a collection of writings by globetrotter Ramnath Biswas will be released in Boi Mela this year. How are they managing to cope alongside bigger publishing houses?

Atikuzzaman stated that the practice of editing has not yet developed in our publishing industry; most publishers do not have their own editorial teams. “As a result, the quality of a significant portion of books produced in the country—in terms of proofreading, fact checking, and other seemingly small but crucial details that make a book fool-proof and communicable to a reader—go unnoticed and fail to meet international standards,” he said.

He also spoke about providing writing assistance for individuals such as cricketers, film stars, etc. who have important contributions to our society and culture but do not necessarily have writing expertise. “This is a practice that has recently become quite popular in India”, the editor added. Notably, this also bridges two big gaps in the publishing industry: one, by elevating the quality of publication and two, creating jobs for aspiring writers, designers and editors.

Rabi Ahmed, publisher of Puthi Puran, which is a subsidiary of Montage publishing house, produces books focusing on films. “This time we have done a different kind of book where film students, currently studying in different universities of Bangladesh, have written articles”, he shares. Puthi Puran has also published *Feluda Pastiche* (2022) ahead of the Boi

Mela, which collates under one book two separate Feluda stories, each progressing simultaneously from the front and back ends of the book. Ahmed said, “We campaigned our books [on film] in various university campuses. We also use Facebook boosting [for other publications].”

While online promotions are a usual practice across industries, it is often one of the few avenues in our country that publishers can employ due to a severe lack of other options. On top of that, the advent of Artificial Intelligence in writing and designing has induced fears of machines taking over for human labour.

“[But] we can look at it from the avenue of possibilities”, Modhupok’s publisher says.

Atikuzzaman explains, “We need to think about how one medium can help another medium and make the exchange between humans and machines a symbiotic one.”

For example, we might be selling 300 print books now instead of 500 because of audiobooks. “However, if we sell 500 audiobooks on top of the 300 printed books, we are ultimately selling 1,100 books, which is benefiting us”, he explains. “Should we, in that case, keep holding onto the idea of merely selling prints, or should we utilise these alternative means to deliver books to our readers?”

Echoing this sentiment, Rabi Ahmed of Puthi Puran said, “*Rohossho Romancho* (2022) is a thriller and horror story collection where we have used AI generated illustrations, but commands were still given by humans and the writing itself was done by writers. AI can never maintain the originality of an artist.”

Maisha Syeda is a writer, painter, and the sub-editor of Daily Star Books.



PHOTO CREDIT: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

producing 300, considering the price of papers, plates, and other materials.

“Each print has a separate cost”, she explained. “The price of paper has increased threefold

survive in the industry.”

Modhupok, in that vein, comes with a different approach and goal. Editor and Publisher AKM Atikuzzaman shares that their vision is to become a

BOOK REVIEW: NONFICTION

One life, and a history of two economies

‘My Seven Decades’ Journey Through British India, Pakistan and Bangladesh’ by Professor Mirza Nurul Huda (University Press Limited, Dhaka, December 2021)

SULTAN HAFEEZ RAHMAN

Mirza Nurul Huda’s memoir is a story of his life and times. Having lived through some of the most tumultuous periods in South Asian history, his memoir provides insights on many significant social, economic and political events that took place in the period. He was a highly reputed economist and professor of Economics at Dhaka University for over two decades. However, his memoir also goes into politics, society and the history of eastern Bengal, as it evolved from British India through Pakistan to independent Bangladesh.

Huda writes about his humble beginnings with rare candour, sharing many events and anecdotes about his life, sometimes related with humour, which make for lively reading.

His is an inspiring tale of a little boy with big dreams rising from the backwaters of Bengal to become a fabled student who went on to be a professor of Dhaka University, and to hold some of the highest offices in public service. The book—and its most animated chapters on East Bengal/East Pakistan—is certain to interest not only economists but also those interested in politics, history and more generally, in Bangladesh studies.

Huda was born in 1918, in a village near Tangail. His father was a school teacher and imam of the village mosque, and his mother a homemaker, who ran a maktab for girls in their home. He started formal learning in a ramshackle village school where children wrote with twigs dipped in homemade ink on banana leaves. Seventeen years later, a young Huda was to take DU by storm. He stood first class first in both the BA (Hons) in 1940 and MA exams of the Economics Department in 1941, and was the first student of the department, as well as the first Muslim student in the colonial era, to be awarded the prestigious Kalinarayan Scholarship. He later won a scholarship to study Rural Economics at Cornell University and obtained a PhD degree in 1949, in a record 18 months. At the time he was an officer on leave from the Bengal Civil Service, and on return was obliged to

resume his service before being allowed to leave it. He finally joined DU as a Reader in the Economics Department in September 1949.

Noting that merit alone was not enough for Muslim students, he suggests they needed agency, which in those days came from social networks comprising murubbis and persons with influence who cared for the advancement of their community. By then, Huda was married to Umme Kulsum Siddiqua, who also obtained a Master’s degree from Columbia University and joined him as a colleague at the Economics Department at DU.

In his memoir, Huda states that ideas about treating Pakistan as consisting of two units for economic planning purposes were

two provinces as a single producing and consuming area for planning purposes. The “Two Economies theory”, he argues, originated from this thinking. The idea provoked increasingly acrimonious debates between economists of the two provinces, both outside and inside the government. The state authorities remained stubbornly hostile to it and its proponents until Pakistan disintegrated. Huda, too, experienced president Ayub Khan’s rage in a meeting in 1961, where he derided them as anti-state elements involved in subversive activities to divide the country.

In the last days of his rule, president Ayub Khan appointed Huda as Governor of East Pakistan. In the backdrop of raging student protests, the challenges of the post

it yet another instance of the West Pakistani hegemony denying the East Pakistanis their legitimate economic and political rights, and shutting them out of affairs of the nation by the cabal that ran Pakistan at the highest level. If elections were allowed to be held in November 1969 as promised, perhaps the history of the country would have followed a different course. Unfortunately, such foresight, wisdom and goodwill were lacking from the civilian and military leadership of West Pakistan.”

Huda chides the anti-democratic machinations of Bhutto and Yahya to deprive the Awami League from forming the government despite their clear electoral mandate, and holds Yahya’s inept and indecisive leadership along with Bhutto’s blatant arrogance responsible for the carnage in Dhaka on March 25-26. Huda’s DU residence near Jagannath Hall was raided and looted, and he nearly lost his life at the hands of the marauding Pakistani soldiers. He provides a chilling account of his family’s harrowing experience in those two days. Armed soldiers raided and looted his house twice. They pointed their guns to shoot him, but brave resistance of his wife and elder daughter saved their lives. Huda, whose faith ran deep, viewed it as a blessing from the Almighty.

He continued to contribute to development planning and policy in Bangladesh, serving as a member of President Sayem’s Advisory Council, as Planning Advisor in charge of the Ministry of Planning, Finance Minister in President Ziaur Rahman’s cabinet, and as Vice President under Justice Sattar as President. He resigned twice in this period, first as Finance Minister in 1980 on health grounds, and a second time as Vice President; but in both instances, the two presidents reappointed him as Advisor. After six years of public service in high offices, Huda returned to private life when HM Ershad, the army chief, overthrew the government in a military coup in March 1982 and imposed martial law.

Dr. Sultan Hafeez Rahman is Professorial Fellow, BRAC University and Director, Graduate Program, BIDS.



COLLAGE: MAISHA SYEDA AND SARAH ANJUM BART.

These photographs were extracted from the book being reviewed here.

floating in the press, but there was no clear definition of the concept until a group of eminent East Pakistani economists issued a report in August 1956. There, for the first time, they called for the necessity of “Two Economies” in Pakistan, at a special conference of the Pakistan Economic Association on the draft First Five-Year Plan at Fazlul Huq Hall, Dhaka University.

Essentially, the differences in resource endowments, levels of development, and geographic separation with little mobility of labour made it unrealistic to view the

were obvious, but after much thought, he accepted the challenge hoping to resolve the crisis and pave the way for a return to democratic rule, thereby saving the country from the hex of another military rule. Merely three days later, on March 25, 1969, Yahya seized power in a coup and imposed Martial Law. Clearly, Islamabad had different plans.

Surprised by the sudden turn of events, Huda writes: “The declaration of Martial Law on the evening of March 25 was therefore both a shock and massive disappointment for the people of East Pakistan. They saw in

BOOK REVIEW: POETRY

Abdus Selim’s poetry compilation is a time machine

‘Selected Poems from Bangladesh: Poets of the Sixties’, compiled and translated by Abdus Selim (Troyee Prokashon, 2022)

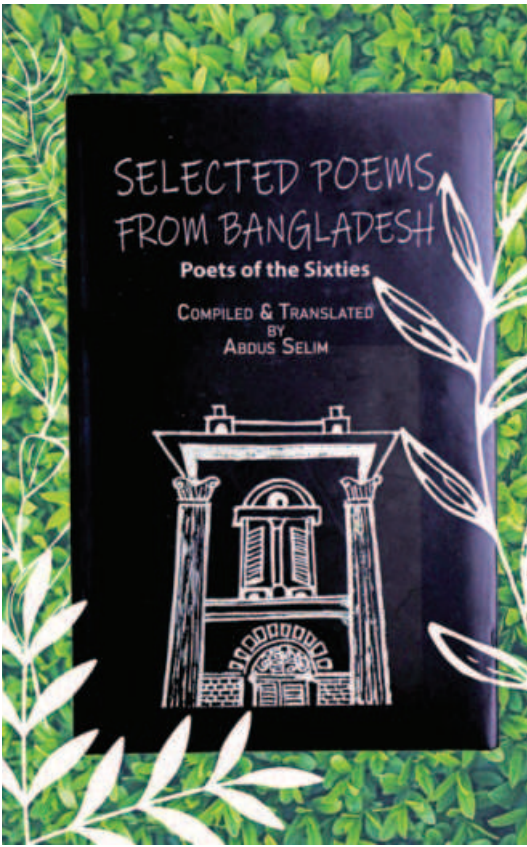
ANUPAM DEBASHIS ROY

Why do we read poetry, especially when they come from a time that is not ours?

Possibly because the poems left a mark in the fabric of the time they represent—marks that are still there. They cause a stir in our minds still, even after more than 80 years of their passing. They force us to think whether or not our imaginary infrastructures are capable of continuously collapsing and rebuilding under the rigours of great poetry.

The book in question, translated and compiled by the academic, writer and translator Abdus Selim, presents poems from some very well known names such as Nirmalendu Goon, Mahadev Saha, Abdul Mannan Syed, Rafiq Azad, Abul Hasan and many others. He has also included poems by Suraiya Khanum and Ruby Rahman. I cannot but feel that gender diversity could be taken further into consideration here—maybe the compiler could have made some more room for non-male poets.

Regardless, Abdus Selim’s translation is excellent. When I read his translation of “Jibananander Kaak” (Jibananda’s Crow), I do not feel lost for having never read the original in Bangla. I follow the metaphors and I follow the trail of blood left by the crow which emerged from a dead poet’s gushing throat. When I read “The Wound”, the translator does not attempt to forcibly translate untranslatable phrases like rakta-tilak; instead he adds a note that leads the author to the back pages where a glossary of such terms is available.



DESIGN: MAISHA SYEDA

This flow of language and the beautiful organisation of the book are surely enough to attract aficionados of poetry in any language.

Another feature that I admired in the book is the index of first lines that comes at the very end of the book. This is very helpful for readers who want to browse at a glance and choose a poem which has an interesting opening. Reading this index led me to “Erosion of Sorrow”, a beautiful poem by Abul Hasan, the legendary poet of melancholy. I am breaking from the inside all the time, and the things around me are breaking as well. As a young-ish adult, I feel that as age grows, erosion grows with it. Kabir puts this idea in his beautiful poem and Selim writes the English last verse with such language that the second exclamation mark (even if it is a typo) feels deserving. “The favour of fortune loses gradually!”, he writes.

Abdus Selim’s translation and compilation is a time machine for all of us living in the new age, where poems have become much neutered. How many poets living today can start a poem saying “There is no problem at all”, like Mohammad Rafiq does, and then go on to list all the problems in such a satirical way that the readers are forced to realise what is really wrong with their society. The poems of the ‘60s provide us an opportunity to look back at an age when our authors were bolder and our books stronger. It transports us to a vivacious time of our political coming up as a nation and gives us a way forward into the future. This is politically charged poetry aimed at exposing society’s ills.

Anupam Debashis Roy is a member of the editorial team at The Daily Star.

Academy Ground to get removable dome

SPORTS REPORTER

The Bangladesh Cricket Board has come up with a new project to tackle the challenges that hinder training during the monsoon season, revealing plans to build another indoor facility at the Academy Ground in Mirpur featuring the amenities expected of a modern indoor facility, including a removable dome.

Such structures are common in countries such as New Zealand and Australia, where the monsoon seasons put a rope on training and the BCB appears to have taken initiative to eliminate the problem that players in Bangladesh have faced for years.

Facilities include artificial turf on the ground and a dome that can cover the ground to keep the rain out.

BCB Grounds Committee chairman Mahbub Anam announced the plans on Wednesday.

“We are going to build a Greenhouse-effector training facility, like the ones in New Zealand and Australia, at the BCB Academy Ground. We are going to have 20 wickets inside, where we can train as usual in the monsoon season. It will be built by June,” Anam told the reporters.

“We can call it an indoor facility but, having said that, we can remove the dome in other seasons. And of course, during the monsoon season, we can install the dome and train,” he added. “The important instruments will start to arrive in late March and we will have them here by April. We would install those in May and may use the facility by June. I hope we can use the facility this monsoon.”



CHead coach Golam Rabbani Choton and BFF's technical director Paul Smalley conduct a technical training session for the under-20 women's team players on Wednesday ahead of the SAFF Under-20 Women's Championship, which kicks off at the Birshreshtha Mostafa Kamal Stadium in kamalapur on Friday. Bangladesh will take on Nepal on the opening day.

PHOTO: BFF

Kiran loses FIFA post

SPORTS REPORTER

Bangladesh Football Federation executive committee member Mahfuza Akhter Kiran retained her post in the AFC executive committee but lost her post as a member of the FIFA Council during the 33rd AFC Congress in Manama yesterday.

The incumbent AFC president was the lone candidate in the AFC electoral congress, where six FIFA Council members, including one female office bearer, were also elected.

Kiran, who had become a FIFA Council member in 2017, was elected unopposed as one of five AFC executive female members from the South zone while Kanya Keomany of Laos was elected unopposed as one of the five from the ASEAN zone.

In a two-way battle for the post as a member of the FIFA Council, Keomany bagged 36 votes to Kiran's seven.

Meanwhile, Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa was re-elected AFC president for a third consecutive term.

The AFC Congress also awarded the hosting rights of 2027 Asian Cup to Saudi Arabia.

‘Good summer planning means no need for January spending’

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid are in good shape so did not need to spend big in the January transfer window unlike clubs in the Premier League, manager Carlo Ancelotti said on Wednesday.

Premier League teams spent a record 815 million pounds (\$1.00 billion) in the January transfer window, an analysis from Deloitte's Sports Business Group said, with more than 275 million pounds spent on Tuesday's deadline day alone.

Real, second in LaLiga, did not make any signings in the winter window but nor did they sell any of their players as they make a push to retain the league and Champions League titles they won last season along with other silverware.

“We did not address the (January) market because we did not need to,” Ancelotti told a news conference ahead of Thursday's LaLiga match against Valencia.

“If you do your planning well, you do not need to go the market (in January).

“If you have to address the market, it means that something went wrong. We thought that we didn't need to... because we see our squad in good shape.”

Ancelotti's former club Chelsea were the biggest spenders in the Premier League, including paying an English record 107 million pounds on deadline day for Benfica and Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez.

“We all know what happens there (in the Premier League) with the money from the television rights that are much higher than everywhere else,” the Italian added.

“And it is not going to change, it will stay this way... gives them more advantages. Yet, they will still be challenged by (other leagues) in Europe.”



Can ringmaster Hathuru be in his element?

SPORTS REPORTER

Following the reappointment of Chandika Hathurusingha as the Bangladesh head coach, the country's cricket awaits some exciting times in the foreseeable future.

Hathurusingha's first stint with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) had ended on a sour note, with the Lankan tendering his resignation during Bangladesh's tour of South Africa in 2017 before taking over as Sri Lanka's head coach.

This time the 54-year-old agreed to a two-year deal, starting from February 2023, and will be in charge of the national team across all three formats. His first assignment is set to be the white-ball home series against England, including three ODIs and as many T20Is, starting March 1.

It will be vital for both Hathurusingha and the BCB to restore the trust which was hampered ahead of his resignation, and how the two parties cooperate this time around is likely to be a tricky process.

The likes of Steve Rhodes and Russell Domingo, who went on to take charge of the Bangladesh team after Hathurusingha, were labelled as soft characters by the BCB. The board apparently wanted to have a strict headmaster for the national team.

Before his resignation, Hathurusingha had expressed his dissatisfaction to the BCB president Nazmul Hassan and raised questions over the mentality and commitment from some of the cricketers.

There were reports that the relationship between Hahurusingha and some of the senior players in the team deteriorated significantly during the latter part of his tenure. In his first stint as the Tigers head coach, Hathurusingha made headlines when the BCB suspended the ace all-rounder for six months for breaching the rules which, according to the BCB president, involved Shakib not obeying the coach and captain of the national team.

It will be interesting to see how Hathurusingha, this time, deals with someone like Shakib – currently the captain of the Tigers Test and T20 side.

Alongside exerting his strict nature as a head coach, Hathurusingha was forced to make huge changes in the selection process during his first tenure. As part of a massive restructure process, Hathurusingha was further included as the member of the selection panel and the then chief selector, Faruque Ahmed, had opposed the board's decision before resigning from his post.

There is no doubt Bangladesh emerged as a force to be reckoned with under Hathurusingha, who was successful in instilling the fearless attitude among the cricketers.

Massive successes popped up under the Sri Lankan coach: reaching the quarter-final of the ICC World Cup in 2015, making it to the semi-final of the ICC Champions Trophy in 2019, ODI series wins at home against Pakistan, India and South Africa, among others.

Even in the Test format, the Tigers registered historic wins over England and Australia at home by utilising the tailor made pitches.

According to a few top BCB officials, the reappointment of Hathurusingha can help Bangladesh cricket to go further, while others feel that the fear-factor of the Sri Lankan can prove to be counter-productive in getting the best out of the current pool of cricketers.



‘Djokovic played Aus Open with 3cm tear in hamstring’

REUTERS

Novak Djokovic played with a three-centimetre (1.2 inches) tear in his hamstring during his run to a record-extending 10th Australian Open title, tournament director Craig Tiley said on Wednesday.

The Serbian, who suffered the hamstring injury en route to winning the warm-up title in Adelaide, won the season-opening major after beating Stefanos Tsitsipas in Sunday's final for a men's record 22nd Grand Slam title, matching Rafa Nadal's haul.

“This guy I did see, he had a three-centimetre tear in his hammy,” Tiley told SEN Sportsday. “Absolutely (I saw the scans), the doctors are going to tell you the truth.

“There was a lot of speculation about whether it was true or not, it's hard to believe that they can do what they do with those kinds of injuries.

“He's remarkable, to deal with it extremely professionally.”

Djokovic's coach Goran Ivanisevic said after the final that the world number one battled the injury, which would have forced most players to quit.

“He's so focused on everything he does, with every single minute of the day,” Tiley added. “That's what he eats, what he drinks, when he does it, how he does it.”

Arsenal strengthen and strugglers buy big

AFP, London

Chelsea were the biggest spenders of a record-breaking January transfer window for Premier League clubs while relegation-threatened teams also splashed the cash on a frenetic final day.

Leaders Arsenal took a more measured approach in strengthening a number of key areas, but Manchester United and struggling Liverpool – two clubs whose owners are seeking fresh outside investment – were relatively quiet.

The Gunners are five points clear at the top of the Premier League with a game in hand – but have they done enough in January to get over the line?

Manager Mikel Arteta wanted highly-rated Ukraine winger Mykhailo Mudryk and Brighton's Moises Caicedo to turbo-charge his push for the club's first league title since 2004.

But Arsenal could not match Chelsea's bid for Mudryk while Brighton rebuffed approaches for their prized midfielder.

Instead, they have added Leandro Trossard, also from Brighton, and Italy international Jorginho, who was snapped up from Chelsea, along with Polish defender Jakub Kiwior.

Trossard adds quality and depth to Arteta's options in wide areas, where Gabriel Martinelli and Bukayo Saka have excelled this season.

Midfielder Jorginho, 31, brings experience and trophy-winning nous after notable success at club and international level.

Arsenal's title bid may also have been aided by Manchester City's lack of activity.

The defending champions boast enviable strength in depth but added only Argentine youngster Maximiliano Perrone and shipped out one of their key players in recent seasons as Joao Cancelo joined Bayern Munich on loan.



Southampton broke their transfer record, snapping up Rennes and Ghana winger Kamaldeen Sulemana for a fee that could reportedly rise to more than £24 million.

The group of clubs hovering just above the bottom five also spent big, with Forest adding yet more new names – three on the final day – in an ongoing revolution at the newly-promoted club.

Leeds broke their transfer record in signing Hoffenheim



PHOTO: STAR

attacker Georginio Rutter, while Leicester brought in Australia defender Harry Souttar from Stoke.

But second-bottom Everton did not make a single January signing to further anger an unhappy fanbase.

Liverpool were quick out of the blocks, agreeing a sizeable deal for Dutch international forward Cody Gakpo in late December as Jurgen Klopp sought to boost his forward line.

But last year's quadruple-chasers failed to do any more business despite their faltering form.

The decision not to reinforce an ageing midfield has raised eyebrows with Liverpool ninth in the table and out of both domestic cup competitions.

Uncertainty over the club's ownership is one of the reasons given for Liverpool's lack of activity and the same can be said of Manchester United.

The Red Devils did not buy a single player to strengthen their push for a top-four place but boosted their options with three loan signings.

United responded quickly to an ankle injury suffered by Christian Eriksen to bring in Marcel Sabitzer from Bayern Munich on deadline day.

Manager Erik ten Hag signed Netherlands forward Wout Weghorst, giving him the option of a tall target man to add bite to his attack, and Jack Butland's arrival added depth to the goalkeeping options.



Pakistani pacer Muhammad Irfan and Afghan allrounder Gulbadin Naib pose for a photograph at the team hotel on Wednesday after joining Sylhet Strikers for the final phase of the Bangladesh Premier League. Sylhet are on top of the BPL table, which resumes in Dhaka tomorrow.

PHOTO: COLLECTED



Supply fuel oil on deferred payment

Dhaka requests Riyadh

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Dhaka has requested Riyadh to supply crude or refined oil from Saudi public oil company Aramco on a deferred payment basis.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen made the request when Saudi Ambassador to Bangladesh Essa Yousef Essa Alduhailan paid a courtesy call on him at the ministry yesterday.

A statement issued by the foreign ministry said, "Reflecting on the current political instability in parts of Europe, the foreign minister urged the [Saudi] envoy to explore possible cooperation from Saudi Arabia in meeting Bangladesh's domestic energy and oil needs and take up the issue of considering [providing] crude/refined oil from Aramco on a deferred payment basis."

The Saudi envoy assured the minister of taking up the proposal with the authorities concerned in the Kingdom.

The issue of importing oil from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), a major source of Bangladesh's oil, at a deferred payment comes when Bangladesh's foreign reserve has dropped to a little over \$32 billion as of January 26.

The International Monetary Fund recently approved a \$4.7 billion loan to support Bangladesh's economy that, like many other countries, has been facing strains stemming mostly from the Russia-Ukraine war.

He handed over a letter to the minister from Saudi SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



Women and children are left in the open as their homes were vandalised during a clash between two factions of the Awami League in Birgaon village of Narsingdi's Raipura upazila yesterday. At least three people were injured in the clash that took place over establishing supremacy in the area. PHOTO: COLLECTED

BUSINESS

Remittance flow hits 5-month high in Jan

Remittance income rose to a five-month high in January as banks have made an all-out effort to mobilise dollars from abroad to overcome the stress in the foreign exchange market.

Expatriates sent home \$1.95 billion last month, the highest since September when \$1.53 billion flew into the country.

"The robust inflow in January has given a breathing space to both the government and the central bank to manage the ongoing crisis," a BB official said.

STORY ON B1

POWER LINES TO BANGLADESH PIL filed against Adani Group at Calcutta HC

OUR CORRESPONDENT, New Delhi

An Indian civil rights group has moved the Calcutta High Court against the installation of transmission lines by an Adani Group-owned power plant that will bring electricity to Bangladesh.

The Association for Protection of Democratic Rights (APDR) and 30 fruit farmers said in the public interest litigation (PIL) that the power lines would have an adverse effect on the livelihood of people living at Farakka in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal.

The petitioners have stated in the PIL that since the majority of the people in the area through which the high-tension electricity lines will pass are dependent on mango and lychee farming, the overhead lines will impact their livelihood. They stated that the lines are over the orchards and should pass through an alternative area.

The electricity lines were being set up there by the Adani Group-owned Godda Thermal Power Station as part of a project stretching from Jharkhand's Godda district to Bangladesh, as mandated by a bilateral trade agreement.

A division bench of the Calcutta High Court comprising Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava and Justice Rajarshi Bhadracharya admitted the petition. The matter is expected to come up for a hearing on February 7.

The petitioners also stated that they protested against the issue in the past but were beaten up by the police.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

CUSTODY BATTLE Father held for going into hiding with daughter

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh-born US citizen Imran Sharif was detained after he allegedly went into hiding with his nine-year-old daughter, ignoring a court order that granted the child's mother the custody of two children.

The Rapid Action Battalion traced Imran with his daughter in Kalachandpur of Gulshan early yesterday after the Japanese mother Eriko Nakano filed a general dairy with Gulshan Police Station. Rab later handed them over to Gulshan Police Station.

Police later sent the girl to the Victim Support Centre, Shahnur Rahman, inspector (investigation) of the police station, told The Daily Star.

Gulshan Assistant Commissioner Newton Das told The Daily Star that the daughter wished to stay with her father while her mother wanted to take her away.

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2

Longer-range rockets to escalate Ukraine conflict

Warns Kremlin as US readies \$2.2b aid package

AGENCIES

The Kremlin said yesterday that longer-range rockets reportedly included in an upcoming package of military aid from the United States to Ukraine would "escalate" the conflict but not change its course.

"This is a direct course to whipping up tension and to escalating the level (of fighting). But again, it won't change the course of events," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists, responding to a question about potential US supplies of missiles with long-range capabilities.

Peskov also told reporters that there were no plans for Russian President Vladimir Putin to hold talks with US President Joe Biden.

The US package of military aid, worth \$2.2 billion, is expected to include longer-range rockets for the first time, two US officials briefed on the matter told Reuters.

In Washington, the United States said Russia was violating the New START nuclear arms control treaty between the two countries. Biden's

administration has been eager to preserve the treaty but ties with Moscow are the worst in decades due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"Russia's refusal to facilitate inspection activities prevents the United States from exercising important rights under the treaty and threatens the viability of US-Russian nuclear arms control," a State Department spokesperson said.

In Ukraine, security services searched the home of one of the country's most prominent billionaires yesterday, moving against a figure once seen as President Volodymyr Zelensky's sponsor in what the authorities called a war-time anti-corruption purge.

The action, days before a summit with the European Union, appears to reflect determination by Kyiv to demonstrate that it can be a steward of billions of dollars in Western aid and shed a reputation as one of the world's most corrupt states.

Photographs circulating on social media appeared to show Ihor

SEE PAGE 6 COL 3

Boeing bids adieu to an icon, delivers last 747 jumbo jet

AFP, Everett



Boeing marked its final commercial delivery of the 747, "the Queen of the Skies" on Tuesday at a ceremony commemorating an aircraft that democratized flying and serves US presidents.

Thousands of current and former employees, celebrities and aviation industry

brass converged on Boeing's plant in Everett, Washington, in the Northwestern part of the United States, a factory built for the assembly of the original "jumbo jet."

The existing fleet of planes are expected to fly for decades more, but in ceasing 747 production more than 50 years after the aircraft's first flight, Boeing is closing a chapter in the history of civil aviation.

John Diedrich, chief executive of Atlas Air, the cargo airline that purchased the final plane in the line, saluted the 747 as "the biggest, baddest commercial aircraft that's flying out there."

The celebration recounted the jet's origins, setting its decades-long evolution to popular music and video footage.

Others who spoke included top executives with Lufthansa Airlines, engine maker Pratt & Whitney

SEE PAGE 6 COL 4

CLASSIFIED DOCS FBI searches Biden's house in Delaware

REUTERS, Washington

The US Justice Department was searching President Joe Biden's second home yesterday, a beach house in Rehoboth, Delaware, as part of its investigation into improper storage of classified materials from his time as vice president.

Biden's personal attorney, Bob Bauer, said in a statement that the search was planned and conducted with the president's "full support and cooperation."

The search by FBI agents appears to represent an expansion of the probe into Biden's handling of classified documents. Materials were earlier found at his home in Wilmington, Delaware, and an office he used during the time between his service as vice president under Barack Obama and his presidential election.

The issue has created a political headache for SEE PAGE 6 COL 1



BNP leaders and activists, carrying banners and festoons, stage a march through the capital's Kamalapur yesterday during a demonstration to press the party's 10-point demand, including national election under a non-party interim government. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

Fitness sham

Vehicle impounded during robbery attempt gets BRTA clearance; official suspended

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

Police on March 15 last year seized a mini-truck for using it to attempt a robbery. Since then, the vehicle has been kept at Cumilla Sadar South Police Station. Despite this fact, the mini-truck (Chattogram Metro-NA-11 2608) got its fitness certificate in November.

The fitness clearance was issued from Barishal circle of Bangladesh Road Transport Authority without any inspection, which is a serious violation of the Road Transport Act 2018 and the relevant orders.

Finding the allegation to be true, the BRTA on Tuesday suspended responsible vehicle inspector Pranab Chandra Nag and attached him to its headquarters in Dhaka.

But this is not a standalone incident. A similar incident took place in July last year when a seized truck got its fitness clearance without any inspection.

Some brokers in collusion with a section of unscrupulous BRTA officials received fitness clearance without even getting the vehicles to its offices concerned, sources at BRTA said.

This correspondent talked to two people who also had fitness certificates of their vehicles renewed with the help of brokers without visiting BRTA offices and they said did so "to avoid hassle".

The lapse in the process came to the fore at a time when questions are being raised about the quality of the BRTA's inspection itself, which is generally carried out manually before issuing fitness clearance.

Unfit vehicles are considered a major reason for road

SEE PAGE 6 COL 2